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THE

TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

A POEM:

IN SIX CANTOS.

BY WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

O voi ch' avete gl' intelletti sani
Mirate la dottrina, che si asconde
Sotto' il velame degli versi strani.

DANTE, Inferno, Canto 9.

THE TWELFTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

With New Original Designs,

BY MARIA FLAXMAN.

CHICHESTER:

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FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND,

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PREFACE.

IT seems to be a kind of duty incumbent on those who devote themselves to poetry, to raise, if possible, the dignity of a declining art, by making it as beneficial to life and manners as the limits of composition, and the character of modern times, will allow. The ages, indeed, are past, in which the song of the poet was idolized for its *miraculous effects*; yet a poem, intended to promote the cultivation of good-humour, may still perhaps be fortunate enough to prove of some little service to society in general; or, if this idea may be thought too chimerical and romantic by sober reason, it is at least one of those pleasing and innocent

illusions, in which a poetical enthusiast may be safely indulged.

The following production owes its existence to an incident in real life, very similar to the principal action of the last canto; but in forming the general plan of the work, it seemed to me absolutely necessary to introduce both the agency and the abode of SPLEEN, notwithstanding the difficulty and the hazard of attempting a subject so happily executed by the masterly pencil of Pope. I considered his Cave of Spleen as a most exquisite cabinet picture; and, to avoid the servility of imitation, I determined to sketch the mansion of this gloomy power on a much wider canvas: happy, indeed, if the judgment of the public may enable me to exclaim with the honest vanity of the painter, who compared his own works to the divine productions of Raphael,

"E son pittore anch' Io!"

The celebrated Alessandro Tassoni, who is generally considered as the inventor of the modern Heroi-comic poetry, was so proud of having extended the limits of his art by a new kind of composition, that he not only spoke of it with infinite exultation in one of his private letters, but even gave a MS. copy of his work to his native city of Modena, with an inscription, in which he stiled it a new species of poetry, invented by himself.

A few partial friends have asserted, that the present performance has some degree of similar merit; but as I apprehend all the novelty it possesses, may rather require an apology, than entitle its author to challenge commendation, I shall explain how far the conduct of the poem differs from the most approved models in this mode of writing, and slightly mention the poetical effects, which such a variation appeared likely to produce.

It is well known, that the favourite poems, which blend the serious and the comic, represent their principal characters in a satirical point of view: it was the intention of Tassoni (though prudence made him attempt to conceal it) to satirize a particular Italian nobleman, who happened to be the object of his resentment. Boileau ridicules the French ecclesiastics without reserve in his Lutrin; Garth, our English physicians, in his Dispensary; and the Rape of the Lock itself, that most excellent and enchanting poem, which I never contemplate but with new idolatry, is denominated *the best satire extant* by the learned Dr. Warton, in his very elegant and ingenious, but severe, Essay on Pope: a sentence which seems to be confirmed by the poet himself, in his letter to Mrs. Fermor, where he says, "the character of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles you in nothing but in beauty." Though I think, that

no composition can surpass, or perhaps ever equal this most happy effort of genius, as a sportive satire, I imagined it might be possible to give a new character to this mixed species of poetry, and to render it by its object, though not in its execution, more noble than the most beautiful and refined satire can be. We have seen it carried to inimitable perfection, in the most delicate raillery on female foibles:—it remained to be tried, if it might not also aspire to delineate the more engaging features of female excellence. The idea appeared to me worth the experiment; for, if it succeeded, it seemed to promise a double advantage; first, it would give an air of novelty to the poem; and, secondly, what I thought of much greater importance, it would render it more interesting to the heart. On these principles, I have endeavoured to paint SERENA as a most lovely, engaging, and accomplished character; yet I

hope the colouring is so faithfully copied from *general nature*, that every man who reads the poem, may be happy enough to know many fair ones who resemble my heroine.

There is another point, in which I have also attempted to give this poem an air of novelty: I mean the manner of connecting the real and the visionary scenes which compose it; by shifting these in alternate cantos, I hoped to make familiar incident and allegorical picture afford a strong relief to each other, and keep the attention of the reader alive by an appearance particularly diversified. I wished, indeed, (but I fear most ineffectually) for powers to unite some touches of the sportive wildness of Ariosto, and the more serious sublime painting of Dante, with some portion of the enchanting elegance, the refined imagination, and the moral graces of Pope; and to do this, if pos-

sible, without violating those rules of propriety, which Mr. Cambridge has illustrated, by example as well as precept, in the Scribleriad, and in his sensible preface to that elegant and learned poem.

I have now very frankly informed my reader of the *extent*, or rather the *extravagance* of my desire; for I will not give it the serious name of *design:* they, whom an enlightened taste has rendered thoroughly sensible how very difficult it must be to accomplish such an idea, will not only be the first to discern, but the most ready to pardon those errors into which so hazardous an attempt may perhaps have betrayed me. I had thoughts of introducing this performance to the public, by a dissertation of considerable length on this species of poetry; but I forbear to indulge myself any further in such preliminary remarks, as the anxiety of authors is so

apt to produce, from the reflection, that, however ingeniously written, they add little or nothing to the success of a good poem, and are utterly insufficient to prevent that neglect, or oblivion, which is the inevitable fate of a bad one.

In dismissing a work to my fair readers, which is intended principally for their perusal, I shall only recommend it to their attention; and bid them farewell, in the words of the pleasant and courteous Tassoni—

> " Vaglia il buon voler, s' altro non lice,
> E chi la leggera, viva felice !"

EARTHAM,
Jan. 31, 1781.

THE

TRIUMPHS of TEMPER.

1 .. CANTO I .. 14

THE mind's soft guardian, who, tho' yet unsung,
Inspires with harmony the female tongue,
And gives, improving every tender grace,
The smile of angels to a mortal face;
Her powers I sing; and scenes of mental strife,
Which form the maiden for th' accomplish'd wife;
Where the sweet victor sees, with sparkling eyes,
Love her reward, and happiness her prize.
Daughters of beauty, who the song inspire,
To your enchanting notes attune my lyre!
And oh! if haply your soft hearts may gain
Or use, or pleasure from the motley strain,
Tho' formal critics, with a surly frown,
Deny your artless bard the laurel crown,

He still shall triumph, if ye deign to spread
Your sweeter myrtle round his honour'd head.

In your bright circle young SERENA grew;
A lovelier nymph the pencil never drew;
For the fond Graces form'd her easy mien,
And heaven's soft azure in her eye was seen.
She seem'd a rose-bud, when it first receives
The genial sun in its expanding leaves;
For now she enter'd those important years,
When the full bosom swells with hopes and fears;
When conscious nature prompts the secret sigh,
And sheds sweet languor o'er the melting eye;
When nobler toys the female heart trepan,
And dolls, rejected, yield their place to man.

Beneath a father's care SERENA grew;
The good Sir GILBERT, to his country true,
A faithful Whig, who zealous for the state
In freedom's service led the loud debate;
Yet every day, by transmutation rare,
Turn'd to a Tory in his elbow-chair,

Canto I Verse 29

Flaxman inv & del. H. Black

Publd May 1. 1803 by Cadell & Davies. Strand

And made his daughter pay, howe'er absurd,
Passive obedience to his sovereign word.

In his domestic sway he borrow'd aid,
From prim PENELOPE, an ancient maid,
His upright sister, conscious of her worth,
Who valued still her beauty, and her birth;
Tho' from her birth no envied rank she gain'd,
And of her beauty but the ghost remain'd;
A restless ghost! that with remembrance keen
Proclaim'd incessant what it once had been;
Delighted still the steps of youth to haunt,
To watch the tender nymph, and warm gallant;
And with an eye that petrified pursuit,
Hang, like the dragon o'er the Hesperian fruit.

Tho' strictly guarded by this jealous power,
The mild SERENA no restraint could sour:
Pure was her bosom as the silver lake,
Ere rising winds the ruffled water shake.

When the bright pageants of the morning sky
Across th' expansive mirror lightly fly,
By vernal gales in quick succession driven,
While the clear glass reflects the light of heav
In gay content a sportive life she led,
The child of Modesty, by Virtue bred:
Her light companions Innocence and Ease;
Her hope was pleasure, and her wish to pleas
For this, to Fashion early rites she paid;
For this, to Venus secret vows she made;
Nor held it sin to cast a private glance
O'er the dear pages of a new romance,
Eager in fiction's touching scenes to find
A field, to exercise her active mind:
The touching scenes new energy imprest
On all the virtues of her feeling breast.
Sweet Evelina's fascinating power
Had first beguil'd of sleep her midnight hour;
Possest by Sympathy's enchanting sway,
She read, unconscious of the dawning day.

" Man as he is" her gentle heart alarm'd;
His troubles griev'd her, but his spirit charm'd.
The generous Paradyne had faults, she own'd,
But sweet contrition for those faults aton'd:
In her pure thought it gave him such a grace,
He seem'd a model for the human race:
Hermsprong arose; his rivals all declin'd;
He sway'd, with sweet ascendancy, her mind:
His savage virtues grew supremely dear,
Gracefully frank, and amiably austere;
Soon for the hero of her heart she chose
This bright reverse of fashionable beaux,
And, tho' a pattern of ideal truth,
Hop'd the wide world might yield her such a youth.
The Modern Anecdote was next convey'd
Beneath her pillow by her faithful maid.
The nymph, attentive as the brooding dove,
Por'd o'er the tender scenes of Franzel's love:
The sinking taper now grew weak and pale;
SERENA sigh'd, and dropt th' unfinish'd tale:

But, as warm clouds in vernal æther roll,
The soft ideas floated in her soul:
Free from ambitious pride, and envious care,
To love, and to be lov'd, was all her pray'r:
While these fond thoughts her gentle mind possess'd,
Soft slumber settled on her snowy breast.

Scarce had her radiant eyes began to close,
When to her view a friendly vision rose:
A fairy Phantom struck her mental sight,
Light as the gossamer, as æther bright;
Array'd like Pallas was the pigmy form,
When the sage goddess stills the martial storm:
Her casque was amber, richly grac'd above
With down, collected from the callow dove:
Her burnish'd breast-plate of a deeper dye,
Was once the armour of a golden fly:
A lynx's eye her little ægis shone,
By fairy spells converted into stone,
And worn of old, as elfin poets sing,
By Egypt's lovely queen, a favourite ring:

Mysterious power was in the magic toy,
To turn the frowns of care to smiles of joy.
Her tiny lance, whose radiance stream'd afar,
Was one bright sparkle from the bridal star.
A filmy mantle round her figure play'd,
Fine as the texture by Arachne laid
O'er some young plant, when glittering to the view
With many an orient pearl of morning dew.
The Phantom hover'd o'er the conscious Fair
With such a lively smile of tender care,
As on her elfin lord Titania cast,
When first she found his angry spell was past.
Round her rich locks SERENA chanc'd to tie
An ample ribband of cærulean dye;
High o'er her forehead rose the graceful bow,
Whose arch commanded the sweet scene below:
The hovering Spirit view'd the tempting spot,
And lightly perch'd on this unbending knot;
As the fair flutterer of Psyche's race,
Is seen to terminate her airy chase,

When, pleas'd at length her quivering wings to close,
Fondly she settles on the fragrant rose.

Now in soft notes, more musically clear
Than ever Fairy breath'd in mortal ear,
These words the visionary voice convey'd
To the charm'd spirit of the sleeping maid:

" Thou darling of my care! whose ripen'd worth
Shall spread my empire o'er the smiling earth;
Whom Nature blest, forbidding modish Art,
To cramp thy spirit, or contract thy heart;
Screen'd from thy thought, nor in thy visions felt,
Long on thy opening mind I fondly dwelt;
In childhood's sorrows brought thee quick relief,
And dry'd thy April-showers of infant grief;
Taught thee to laugh at the malicious boy,
Who broke thy playthings with a barbarous joy,
To bear what ills the little female haunt,
The testy nurse, th' imperious gouvernante,
And that tyrannic pest, the prying maiden aunt.

Now ripening years a nobler scene supply;
For life now opens on thy sparkling eye:
Thy rising bosom swells with just desire
Rapture to feel, and rapture to inspire:
Not the vain bliss, the transitory joys,
That childish woman feels in radiant toys;
The costly diamond, or the lighter pearl,
The massive Nabob, or the tinsel Earl.
Thy heart demands, each meaner aim above,
Th' imperishable wealth of sterling love;
Thy wish, to please by every softer grace
Of elegance and ease, of form and face!
By lively fancy and by sense refin'd,
The stronger magic of the cultur'd mind!
Thy pure ambition, and thy virtuous plan,
To fix the variable heart of man;
The slave of falsehood from her snare dismiss,
And build on truth his glory and his bliss!
Short is the worship paid at Beauty's shrine;
But lasting love and happiness are mine:

Mine, tho' this earth's mistaken, blinded race
Despise my guardian aid, my name debase;
Nor breathe one vow to that ætherial friend,
On whom the colours of their life depend.
But to thy innocence I now display
The mystic marvels of my secret sway;
And tell in this thy fate deciding hour,
My race, my name, my office, and my power.

First, hear what wonders human forms contain
And learn the texture of the female brain!
By Nature's care in curious order spread,
This living net is fram'd of tender thread;
Fine as thy hand, some favour'd youth to grace,
Knits with nice art to form the mimic lace.
Within the centre of this fretted dome,
Her secret tower! her heav'n constructed home!
Soft Sensibility, sweet Beauty's soul!
Keeps her coy state, and animates the whole,
Invisible as Harmony, who springs,
Wak'd by young Zephyr, from Æolian strings:

Her subtle power, more delicately fine,
Dwells in each thread, and lives in every line,
Whose quick vibrations, without end, impart
Pleasure and pain to the responsive heart.
As Zephyr's breath the willing chord inspires,
Whispering soft music to the trembling wires,
So, with fond care, I regulate, unseen,
The softer movements of this nice machine;
TEMPER, my earthly name, the nurse of Love!
But call'd SOPHROSYNE in realms above!
When lovely Woman, perfect at her birth,
Blest with her early charms the wond'ring earth,
Her soul, in sweet simplicity array'd,
Nor shar'd my guidance, nor requir'd my aid.
Her tender frame, nor confident nor coy,
Had every fibre tun'd to gentle joy:
No vain caprices swell'd her pouting lip;
No gold produced a mercenary trip;
Soft innocence inspir'd her willing kiss,
Her love was nature, and her life was bliss.

Guide of his reason, not his passion's prey,
She tam'd the savage, Man! who bless'd her sw
No jarring wishes fill'd the world with woes,
But youth was ecstacy, and age repose.

The powers of Mischief met in dark divan,
To blast these mighty joys of envied Man:
The fiends, at their infernal leader's call,
Fram'd their base wiles in Demogorgon's hall,
In the deep centre of that dreadful dome,
A hellish cauldron boil'd with fiery foam:
In this wide urn the circling spirits threw
Ingredients harsh, and hideous to the view;
While the terrific master of the spell
With adjurations shook the depths of Hell,
And in dark words unmeet for mortal ear,
Bade the dire offspring of his art appear.
Forth from the vase, with sullen murmurs, bro
A towering mass of pestilential smoke:
Emerging from this fog of thickest night,
A phantom swells, by slow degrees, to sight;

But ere the view can seize the forming shape,
From the mock'd eye its lineaments escape:
It seem'd all passions melted into one,
Assum'd the face of all, and yet was none:
Hell stood aghast at its portentous mien,
And shuddering demons call'd the spectre, Spleen.
'Hie thee to earth!' its mighty master cried,
'O'er the vex'd globe in heavy vapours ride!
Within its centre fix thy shadowy throne!
With shades thy subjects, and that hell thy own!
Reign there unseen! but let thy strong controul
Be hourly felt in woman's wayward soul!
With darkest poisons from our deep abyss,
Taint that pure source of sublunary bliss!'
Th' enormous phantom, at this potent sound,
Roll'd forth obedient from the vast profound:
The quaking fiends recover'd from their dread,
And hell grew lighter as the monster fled.
But now round earth the gliding vapours run,
Blot the rich æther, and eclipse the sun;

All Nature sickens; and her fairest flower,
Enchanting Woman! feels the baneful Power
As in her soul the clouds of Spleen arise,
The sprightly essence of her beauty flies:
In youth's gay prime, in hours with rapture w
Love looks astonish'd on her altering form:
To pleasing frolics, and enchanting wiles,
Life-darting looks, and soul-subduing smiles,
Dark whims succeed: thick-coming fancies fi
The sullen passion, and the hasty pet;
The swelling lip, the tear distended eye,
The peevish question, the perverse reply;
The moody humour, that, like rain and fire,
Blends cold disgust with unsubdu'd desire,
Flies what it loves, and, petulantly coy,
Feigns proud abhorrence of the proffer'd joy
For Nature's artless aim, the wish to please
By genuine modesty, and simple ease,
Fashion's pert tricks the crowded brain oppr
With all the poor parade of tawdry dress:

The sickly bosom pants for noise and show,
For every bauble, and for every beau;
The voice, that health made harmony, disowns
That native charm for languor's mimic tones:
And feigns disease, till, feeling what it feigns,
Its fancied maladies are real pains.
Such, and a thousand still superior woes,
From Spleen's new empire o'er the earth arose:
Each simple dictate of the soul forgot,
Then first was form'd the mercenary plot;
And Beauty practis'd the pernicious art,
Of angling slyly for an old man's heart;
Tho' crawling to his bride with tottering knees,
His words were dotage, and his love disease.
From sex to sex the base contagion ran,
And gold grew beauty in the eyes of man:
Courtship was traffic: and the married life
But one loud jangle of incessant strife.

The gentle Sprite, who on his radiant car,
Shines the mild regent of the evening star,

And joys from thence those genial rays to shed,
That lead the bridegroom to the nuptial bed,
While earth's new ills his friendly soul absorb,
From Cynthia call'd me to his kindred orb;
And, eager to redress the woes of man,
The brilliant son of Vesper thus began:
'Thou softest being of th' ætherial kind,
Be thy benignant cares no more confin'd
To smooth the ruffled plume of Zephyr's wing,
To guard from cruel frost the infant spring,
To drive gross atoms from the rays of noon,
Or chase the halo from the vapourish moon!
Thy friendly nature will not now deny
To quit for nobler toils thy native sky;
Thou seest how Spleen's infernal vapours roll
Across the sweet serene of Woman's soul;
And earth, which darkens as her beauties fade,
Must grow a second hell without thy aid:
Take then thy station! fix thy nobler reign
O'er those fine chords that form the female brain,

That us'd, ere injur'd by the rust of Spleen,
To fill with harmony the human scene!
Go! lest her touch their tender tones destroy,
Teach them to vibrate to thy notes of joy!
Go! and restore, by stilling mental strife,
Health to faint love, and happiness to life!'
So spake that friend of man, who lights above
His heavenly lamp of Hymeneal love:
In his just aim my kindred spirit join'd,
And flew obedient to the charge assign'd,
Hence, as the bias sways th' unconscious bowl,
I long unseen have sway'd the careless soul;
Tho' oft I feel my power by Spleen subdu'd,
In the shrill vixen, and the sullen prude,
In some fair forms my soft dominion grows,
Like fragrance, rising from the opening rose;
Still I perceive in many a lovely face,
That gay good-humour, and that constant grace,
Which heavenly powers united to infold
In perfect Woman's new-created mould;

When Nature, in her infant beauty blest,
The last, and loveliest of her works carest.
But of those nymphs, who, delicately fair,
Draw soft attractions from my forming care,
My young SERENA shines her peers above,
Pride of my hopes! and darling of my love!
Hence I to thee such mysteries unfold,
As man's pedantic eye shall ne'er behold;
Whose narrow science, tho' it proudly boast,
To pierce the sky, and count the starry host,
Sees not the lucid band of airy powers,
Who flutter round him in his secret hours:
But if to me, thy guardian now display'd!
Thy duteous orisons are justly paid,
Thou to those realms shalt pass, with me thy g
Where Spleen's pale victims, after death, resid
Then to that orb, in vision shalt thou rise,
(Not seen by mortal astronomic eyes,
Not e'en by Herschell, whose angelic ken,
Finds a mute star, and bids it speak to men)

Where I—but first let me thy soul prepare
To meet our secret foe's insidious snare!
To live untouch'd by subtle Spleen requires
The ceaseless care of disciplin'd desires.
'Tis my fond purpose in thy form to show
The sweetest model of my skill below:
A youth I destine to thy dear embrace,
Crown'd with each mental charm, and manly grace,
With whom thy innocence, secure from strife,
Shall reach the beauteous joys of blameless life.
Pleas'd I observe thy little heart begin
To ask, what charms the mighty prize may win:
But know, tho' Elegance herself be seen
To guide thy motion, and to form thy mien;
Tho' Beauty o'er thy filial cheek diffuse
The soft enchantment of her roscate hues,
Not from their favour shall this glory rise!
Temper shall singly gain the splendid prize:
The sudden conquest shall be mine alone,
And Love with transport shall my triumph own,

Such are my hopes, but I with pain relate,
What hard conditions are annex'd by fate:
As chemic fires, that patient labour blows,
Draw the rich perfume from the Persian rose.
So must thou form, by fiery toils refin'd,
The living essence of thy sweeter mind.
Dimly I see, on Destiny's dull glass,
Three dangerous trials 'tis thy doom to pass;
And, oh! if once forgetful of my power,
Good humour fail thee in the fateful hour,
Farewell those joys that wait the happy wife!
Farewell the vision of unclouded life!

Fain would my love thy secret perils show,
Which fate allows not even me to know:
In Spleen's dark court a thousand agents dwell,
Who bind their victims in the wayward spell!
Perchance three prime supporters of her sway,
The busiest of her fiends! may cross thy way:
Stern Contradiction, her ill-favour'd child!
Of fierce demeanor, and of spirit wild,

Bane of delight! and horror of the sex!
His plan to puzzle, and his pride to vex!—
Or Scandal, filthy hag! who blindly limps
Round the wide earth, supported by her imps,
Her inky demons, who delight to print
Her base suggestion, and her envious hint:—
Or groundless Jealousy, pert changeling! born
Of amorous Vanity, and angry Scorn,
Whose bitter taunts with public insult dare
Basely to wound the unoffending fair;
Proud the sweet joys of innocence to crush,
And spread o'er Beauty's cheek the burning blush.
Whether these kindred fiends, or one, or all,
Shall aim thy airy spirit to enthrall,
Are points, my fondness tries in vain to reach;
But trust my caution! and beware of each!

Lest to thy lively mind my words may seem
The vain chimera of a common dream,

By one unquestionable sign be taught
To prize my presence in thy waking thought!
An azure ribband, on thy toilet thrown,
Shall make the magic of my empire known:
On this thy sportive needle tried its powers,
And silver spangles form'd the mimic flowers;
On these my love shall breathe a secret charm;
With this, my cestus! thy soft bosom arm!
Above it let the decent tucker rise,
To hide the mystic band from mortal eyes!
When Spleen's dark powers would teach that b
to swell,
This guardian cincture shall those powers repel
As the touch'd talisman, more swift than thou
To save her charge th' Arabian fairy brought,
So shall this zone, if my command's obey'd,
Bring my quick spirit to thy certain aid.
In Love's great name observe this high behest!
Revere my power—Be gentle, and be blest!

Here the kind Sprite her friendly counsel clos'd,
And lightly vanish'd—Still Serena doz'd;
Still in sweet trance she fondly seem'd to hear
The soft persuasion vibrate in her ear.
But waking now far different notes she found;
Less pleasing echoes in her chamber sound:
For now the heralds of the London day
Sing their loud matins in th' uncrowded way;
Th' impatient milk-maid now, with early din,
Screams to the rattle of her pail of tin;
With sweep's faint cry, and, latest of the crew,
The deep-ton'd music of the murmuring Jew.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

THE

TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

.. CANTO II ..

YE radiant nymphs! whose opening eyes convey,
Warmth to the world, and lustre to the day!
Think what o'ershadowing clouds may cross your brain,
Before those lovely lids shall close again!
What funds of patience twelve long hours may ask,
When cold Discretion claims her daily task!
Ah! think betimes! and, while your morning care
Sheds foreign odours o'er your fragrant hair,
Tinge your light spirit with that mental sweet,
Which may not be exhal'd by passion's heat;
But charm the sense with undecaying power,
Thro' every chance of each diurnal hour!
Oh! might you all perceive your toilets crown'd
With such cosmetics as SERENA found!

For, to the warning vision fondly true,
Now the quick fair-one to her toilet flew:
With keen delight her ravish'd eye survey'd
The mystic ribband on the mirror laid:
Bright shone the azure as Aurora's car,
And every spangle seem'd a living star.
With sportive grace the smiling damsel prest
The guardian cincture to her snowy breast,
More lovely far than Juno, when she strove
To look most lovely in the eyes of Jove;
And willing Venus lent her every power,
That sheds enchantment o'er the amorous hour:
For spells more potent on this band were thrown,
Than Venus boasted in her beauteous zone.
Her dazzling cestus could alone inspire
The sudden impulse of short-liv'd desire:
These finer threads with lasting charms are fraught,
Here lies the tender, but unchanging thought,
Silence that wins, where eloquence is vain,
And tones that harmonize the madd'ning brain,

Soft sighs that anger cannot hear and live,
And smiles that tell how truly they forgive;
And lively grace, whose gay diffusive light
Puts the black phantoms of the brain to flight,
Whose cheering powers thro' every period last,
And make the present happy as the past.

Such secret charms this richer zone possest,
Whose flowers, now sparkling on SERENA's breas
Give, tho' unseen those swelling orbs they bind,
Smiles to her face, and beauty to her mind:
For now, observant of the Sprite's behest,
The nymph conceals them by her upper vest:
Safe lies the spell, no mortal may descry,
Not keen Penelope's all-piercing eye;
Who constant, as the steps of morn advance,
Surveys the household with a searching glance,
And entering now, with all her usual care,
Reviews the chamber of the youthful fair.
Beneath the pillow, not completely hid,
The novel lay—she saw—she seiz'd—she chid:

With rage and glee her glaring eye-balls flash,
Ah! wicked age! she cries, ah! filthy trash!
From the first page my just abhorrence springs;
For modern anecdotes are monstrous things:
Yet will I see what dangerous poisons lurk,
To taint thy youth in this licentious work.
She said: and rudely from the chamber rush'd,
Her pallid cheek with expectation flush'd,
With ardent hope her eager spirit shook,
Vain hope! to banquet on a luscious book.
So if a priest of the Arabian sect,
In Turkish hands forbidden wine detect,
The sacred mussulman, with pious din,
Arraigns the culprit, and proclaims the sin,
Curses with holy zeal th' inflaming juice,
But cursing takes it for his secret use.

The gay SERENA, with unruffled mind,
The pleasing novel, thus unread, resign'd.
The vision on her soul such virtue left,
She only smil'd at the provoking theft;

The teasing incident she deem'd a jest,
Nor felt the zone grow tighter on her breast.

Now in full charms descends the finish'd fai
For now the morning banquet claims her care
Already at the board, with viands pil'd,
Her sire impatient sits, and chides his tardy c
On his imperial lips rude hunger reigns,
And keener politics usurp his brains:
But when her love-inspiring voice he hears,
When the soft magic of her smile appears,
In that glad moment he at once forgets
His empty stomach, and the nation's debts:
He bends to Nature's more divine control,
And only feels the father in his soul.
Quick to his hand behold her now present,
The Indian liquor of celestial scent!
Not with more grace the nectar'd cup is given
By rose-lipped Hebe to the lord of heaven.
While her fair hands a fresh libation pour,
Fashion's loud thunder shakes the sounding do

The light SERENA to the window springs,
On curiosity's amusive wings:
Her quick eyes sparkle with surprize, to see
The glories of a golden vis-à-vis:
Its glittering tablet gleam'd with mimic pearl,
And the rich coronet announced an earl.
The good old knight grew somewhat proud to hear
Of this new visit from the early peer:
SERENA recollects the vision's truth,
And, fluttering, hopes it is the promis'd youth:
PENELOPE from her high chamber peeps;
There her unfinish'd charms she coyly keeps;
With sage reserve her modesty abhorr'd
To shew her morning face before a lord.

The peer alights: the well rang'd vassals bawl
His sounding title thro' the spacious hall,
Till in the deep saloon's extremest bound
Th' ear-tickling words, "Lord FILIGREE" resound.
As when great Hector setting war apart,
Advanc'd to parley, with his spear athwart,

The Greeks beheld him with a still delight,
And silent reverence stopt the rising fight;
With such respect, but unchastis'd by fear,
Sir GILBERT and the nymph first met the peer;
And, while his morning compliments commence,
The slighted breakfast stands in cold suspense.
But far unlike to Hector's ruder grace,
His modern stature, and his modish face;
Nor less he differs from those barons old,
Whose arms are blazon'd on his car of gold;
Whose prostrate castle guarded once the lands,
Where, spruce in motley pride, his villa stands,
By taste erected in her trimmest mode,
Her mushroom structure, and her quaint abode.

As the neat daisy to the sun's broad flower,
As the French boudoir to the Gothic tower,
Such is the peer, whom fashion much admires,
Compar'd in person to his ancient sires:
For their broad shoulder, and their brawny calf,
Their coarse, loud language, and their coarser laugh,

His finer form, more elegantly slim,
Displays the fashionable length of limb;
With foreign shrugs his country he regards,
And her lean tongue with foreign words he lards;
While Gallic graces, who correct his style,
Forbid his mirth to pass beyond a smile.
As the nice workman in the wooden trade
Hides his coarse ground, with finest woods o'erlaid,
Thus our young lord, with fashion's phrase refin'd,
Fineer'd the mean interior of his mind:
And hence, in courtesy's mild lustre seen,
His spirit shone as graceful as his mien.
The artless fair, on fashion's kind report,
Thought him the mirror of a matchless court:
Much she his dress, his language much observes,
Whose finer accents prove his feeling nerves.
Her fancy now the destin'd lover spies,
But her free heart abjures the quick surmise;
No speech of his, in purpose, or in tone,
Announc'd a mind congenial to her own;

Yet as he spoke, at every flattering word
The vision's promise to her thought recurr'd.
Far more parental pride contrives to blind
The good Sir GILBERT's more experienc'd mind,
Who fondly saw, and at the prospect smil'd,
A future countess in his favourite child.
But what new flutterings shook SERENA's breast,
What hopes and fears the modest nymph opprest,
When with a simpering smile, and soft regard,
The peer display'd a mirth-expressive card,
Where the gay Graces, in a sportive band,
Shew the sweet art of Cipriani's hand;
Where, in their train, his airy Cupids throng,
And laughing, drag a comic mask along!
"We," cries my lord, with self-sufficient joy,
Twirling, with lordly airs, the graceful toy,
"We, who possess true science, we, who give
The world a lesson in the art to live,
We for the fair a splendid fête design,
And pay our homage thus at Beauty's shrine."

He spoke! and speaking, to the blushing maid,
With modish ease, th' inviting card convey'd,
Where Mirth announc'd her masque-devoted hour
In characters intwin'd with many a flower:
The blushing maid, with eyes of quick desire,
View'd it, and felt her little soul on fire;
For of all scenes she had not yet survey'd,
Her heart most panted for a masquerade:
But her gay hopes increasing terrors drown,
And dread forebodings of her father's frown.
In mute suspense to read his thought she tries,
And strongly pleads with her prevailing eyes,
Her eyes, for doubt enchain'd her modest tongue,
While on his sovereign word her pleasure hung.
With such a tender and persuasive air
Of soft endearment, and of anxious care,
Thetis attended from th' almighty sire
His fateful answer to her fond desire.
The good old knight, like the Olympian god,
Blest the fair suppliant with a gracious nod;

Her lively spirit the kind signal took,
And her glad heart in every fibre shook.
The party settled, it imports not how,
The peer politely made his parting bow;
The nymph, with eyes that sparkled joyous fire,
Kiss'd the round cheek of her complying sire,
Then swiftly flew, and summon'd to her aid
Th' important counsel of her favourite maid,
To vent her joy, and as the moments press,
To fix that first of points, a fancy dress!

Quick as the poet's eyes o'er nature fly,
Piercing the deep, or traversing the sky,
With such light speed her fond ideas glance
O'er play and poem, story, and romance,
While all the characters she e'er has read
Flash on her brain, and fill her busy head.

Now in Diana's form she hopes to meet
A fond Endymion sighing at her feet;

Now her proud thought terrestrial pomp assumes,
And Dian's crescent yields to Indian plumes;
Now, in the habit of the Grecian isles,
She hears some Osman suing for her smiles,
And sees his soul that blaze of dress outshine,
Whose wealth impoverish'd a diamond mine;
Now simpler charms her quick attention draw,
The rose-crown'd bonnet, and the hat of straw,
A village maid she seems, in neat attire,
A faithful shepherd now her sole desire.
Thus, as new figures in her fancy throng,
"She's every thing by starts, and nothing long;"
But, in the space of one revolving hour,
Flies thro' all states of poverty and power,
All forms, on whom her veering mind can pitch,
Sultana, gipsy, goddess, nymph, and witch.
At length, her soul with Shakespeare's magic fraught,
The wand of Ariel fixt her roving thought;
Ariel's light graces all her heart possess,
And Jenny's ordered to prepare the dress.

It seems already bought, with fond applause;
An azure tissue, and a silver gauze;
Too soon, alas! that garb of heavenly hue
Shines with illusive lustre in her view.
Ah, blind to fate! how oft the youthful belle
Feels her gay heart at sight of tissue swell!
And thinks the fashionable silk must prove
Her robe of triumph, and a spell to love!
To thee, sweet maid, whose pleasure-darting eyes
Joy in this favourite vest, an hour shall rise,
When thou shalt hate the silk so fondly sought,
And wish thy silver-spotted gauze unbought *:
For busy Spleen thy trial now prepares;
Darkly she forms her unsuspected snares,
And, keen to raise her pleasure-killing storm,
Assumes PENELOPE's congenial form.

* Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futuræ,
Et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis.
Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
Intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque
Oderit. Æneidi x. v. 501.

In that prim shape, which all the Graces shun,
See the sour fiend to good Sir GILBERT run!
Where, deeply pondering the public debt,
Silent he muses o'er a new gazette!
Ent'ring, she view'd, with eyes of envious spite,
The card, that spoke the masque-devoted night:
Eager she darted on the graceful toy,
And, fiercely pointing to each naked boy,
"Canst thou," she cried, in a discordant scream,
That rous'd the politician from his dream,
While with her voice the echoing chamber rings,
"* Say, canst thou suffer these flagitious things?
Are these devices to thy daughter brought,
That wake such gross impurity of thought?
In vain are all the prudent words I preach,
The modest maxims that I strive to teach;
By foolish fondness of your sense beguil'd,
You still indulge and spoil the flippant child;

D

* Ζευ πατερ, ου νεμεσιζη, ὁρων ταδε καρτερα εργα

Iliad, v 872.

For me, whate'er I say is deem'd absurd;
She scorns my sage advice:—but mark my word
If to this ball you let the hoydon run,
Your power is ended, and the girl undone."

The patriot knight, by interruption vext,
In his political pursuits perplext,
While he with wrath th' intruding Mischief eyed,
Stern to the false PENELOPE replied:
"Go, teasing prude! cease in my ears to vent
Thy envious pride, and peevish discontent!
To me of prudence canst thou vainly boast?
Of all my household thou hast plagued me most:
The joys thou blamest are thy dear delight,
By day the visit! and the ball by night!
And, tho' too old the lover to trapan,
Thy midnight dream, thy morning thought is—man!
Wert thou less closely to my blood allied,
Thou should'st, to cure thee of thy canting pride,
Be sent to sigh alone o'er purling brooks,
Scold village maids, and croak to croaking rooks."

He spoke, indignant: the sly fiend withdrew
Nor inly griev'd; for well her force she knew.
As Indian females, in a jealous hour,
Of secret poison try the subtlest power,
Which sure, tho' slow, corrodes th'unconscious prey,
And ends its triumph on a distant day:
Thus the departing fury left behind
Her venom, latent in SIR GILBERT'S mind.
The hidden mischief tho' no eye observes,
He feels it fretting on his alter'd nerves;
But the kind habit of his healthy soul
Still struggled hard against its base control.
Now Spleen's dark vapours, in his bosom hid,
Prompt him the promis'd pleasure to forbid;
Now Love's soft pleadings that dire thought destroy,
And save the blossom of his daughter's joy;
Her envious aunt now serves him for a jest,
And gay good-humour reassumes his breast.

While Spleen's dark power now sinks and now revives,
At length the day, th' important day arrives,
Which in his breast must end the close debate,
And fix the colour of SERENA's fate.

Now comes the hour, when the convivial knight
Waits to begin the dinner's cheerful rite:
His fond heart ever with a father's pride,
Joys to behold his darling at his side;
But most the absence of her smile he feels
In the gay season of his social meals:
Hence, while for her the rich repast attends,
His hasty summons to the nymph he sends:
The happy nymph superior cares induce
To risk his anger by a rash excuse;
She craves his pardon; but, for time distrest,
She still is busy on her magic vest;
To range her diamonds in a sparkling zone
She begs to snatch her scanty meal alone.

The knight in sullen state begins to dine:
Spleen, like a harpy, flutters o'er his wine:
Invisible she poisons every dish,
Tinging with gall his mutton, fowl, and fish.
The more he eats, the more perverse he grows;
For as his hunger sunk, his choler rose.
The cloth remov'd, he cries, with vapour sick,
The pears are mellow, and the port is thick;
Tho' nicer fruit Pomona never knew,
And his rich wine surpass'd the ruby's hue!

A thousand times his dizzy brain revolves
A stern command: now doubts and now resolves
To bid the nymph descend, and disarray'd,
Quit her dear project of the masquerade:
As oft kind nature to his heart recurr'd,
And love parental stopt the cruel word.

Meantime, unconscious of the brooding storm,
The nymph exults in her improving form:

Gay is her smile, as those the Queen of Love
Darts on the Graces in her court above,
While they contrive, with love-inspiring cares,
New modes of beauty for the robe she wears.
At length each duty of the toilet past,
The glance of triumph on the mirror cast.
Now the light wand our finish'd Ariel arms;
Glad Jenny glories in her lady's charms;
And gives full utterance, as she smooths her vest,
To the sweet bodings of SERENA's breast.

Oh! lovely bias of the female soul!
Which trembling points to pleasure's distant pole;
Which, with fond trust, on flattering hope relies,
O'erleaps all perils that in prospect rise,
And springing to the goal anticipates the prize!
Such was SERENA's fear-discarding state;
Her eye beheld not the dark frowns of fate:
She only saw, the combat all forgot,
The triumph promis'd as her glorious lot.

Now, eager to display her light attire,
The sprightly damsel seeks her sullen sire;
His gloomy brow with sportive air she kist;
Ah! how could Spleen that magic lip resist?
That voice, whose melting music might assuage
The scorpion Anger's self-tormenting rage?
For ne'er did Nature to a sire's embrace
Present a filial form of softer grace;
Or Fancy view a shape of lovelier kind
In the bright mirror of her Shakespeare's mind.

The sulky fiend, in spite of all her art,
Had now been banish'd from the father's heart,
But that, resolv'd her utmost force to try,
She summon'd to her aid her old ally,
The fiery demon, temper-troubling Gout,
Who sinks the lively, and appals the stout;
Who now, assisting Spleen's malignant aim,
Shoots in quick throbbings thro' Sir GILBERT's frame.

Thus sorely pester'd by a double foe,
Galling his giddy brain, and burning toe,
The testy knight, with stern and sullen air,
Denounc'd his humour to the shuddering fair:
"Go change your dress! give up this vain delight!
I will not hear of masquerades to-night:
I must recall my word, too fondly meant,
So change your dress, and sit with me content."

As the proud dame, whose avaricious glee
Built golden castles in the rich South Sea,
Gaz'd on her broker, when he told her first
Her wealth was vanish'd, and the bubble burst:
So gaz'd the nymph, hearing her sire destroy
Her airy palace of ideal joy.
First her fond thoughts to flattering doubt incline,
And deem the harsh command no fix'd design,
But the quick sally of a peevish word,
That love revokes the moment it is heard:
Or haply mirth, in mimic wrath exprest,
A feign'd forbiddance utter'd but in jest:

To this short hope her sinking spirit clung,
To see his softening eyes refute his tongue.
Ah, fruitless hope! for there she cannot find
The well-known signals of the friendly mind.
Stern contradiction, with the frown of fate,
On his dark visage reign'd in sullen state;
Felt in each feature, in each accent shown,
Lower'd in his look, and thunder'd in his tone.
Hence the warm bosom of the lively fair
Now shivers with the chill of blank despair:
Now disappointment's thick'ning shadows roll
A cloud of horror o'er the darken'd soul:
And fancy, in a sick delirium tost,
Gives double value to each pleasure lost.
The blasted joys she labours to forget,
Rush on her mind, and waken keen regret:
Her cheek turns pale—the tear prepares to start,
And palpitation heaves her swelling heart.
But here, SOPHROSYNE! thy guardian aid
Saves from her potent foe the sinking maid.

Her bosom, into strong emotions thrown,
Now feels the pressure of thy friendly zone.
Swift thy kind cautions to her soul recur,
More quick to cancel faults than prone to err.
As the rough swell of the insurgent tides
By the mild impulse of the moon subsides,
So, by her mystic monitor repress,
The flood of passion leaves her lighten'd breast;
From her clear brain each cloudy vapour flies,
And joy's bright ray rekindles in her eyes.
Reviving gaiety full lustre spread
O'er all her features, and with smiles she said,
" Let others drive to pleasure's distant dome!
Be mine the dearer joy to please at home!"
Scarce had she spoke, when she with sportive ease
Prest her piano-forte's fav'rite keys.
O'er softes notest her rapid fingers ran,
Sweet prelude to the Air, she thus began:

SOPHROSYNE! thou guard unseen!
Whose delicate control
Can turn the discord of chagrin
To harmony of soul!
Above the lyre, the lute above,
Be mine thy melting tone,
Which makes the peace of all we love
The basis of our own!

So sung the nymph, not uninspir'd: the sprite
Invok'd so fondly in the mystic rite,
With richest music swell'd her warbling throat,
And gave new sweetness to her sweetest note.
As when the seraph Uriel first begun
His carol to the new created sun,
The sacred echo shook the vast profound,
And chaos perish'd at the potent sound:
So, at the magic of SERENA'S strain,
Spleen vanish'd from her sire's chaotic brain;
Whose fibres, lighten'd of that load rejoice
In the dear accents of her dulcet voice.

Much he inclines his mandate to recall,
And send the fair-one to the promis'd ball;
But stubborn pride forbids him to revoke
The solemn sentence, which ill-humour spoke.
Still conscious of her power, the nymph prolongs
The soft enchantment of her soothing songs;
Which his fond mind in firm attention keep,
To his fixt hour of supper and of sleep:
This now arriv'd, the knight, retiring, shed
A double blessing on his darling's head;
And with unusual exultation prest
His lovely child to his parental breast.

Thus while to rest the happy sire withdrew,
The nymph, more happy, to her chamber flew;
And, Jenny now dismiss'd, the grateful fair
Breathes to her guardian Sprite this tender prayer:
" Thou kind preserver! whose attentive zeal
Gives me in this contented hour to feel
That dearest pleasure of a soul refin'd,
The triumph of the self-corrected mind;

Canto II.ª Verse 471.

Flaxman inv.t del. W.m Blake sculp

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If happy in the strength, thy smiles impart,
I own thy favour in no thankless heart,
Still let me view thy form, so justly dear!
Still, in kind vision, to these eyes appear!
Thy friendly dictates teach me to fulfil!
And let thy aid avert each future ill!"

While fond devotion taught her thus to speak,
The soft down sinks beneath her lovely cheek,
And settling on her lips, that sweetly close,
Silence enamour'd, lulls her to repose.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

THE

TRIUMPHS OF TEMPE!

1 .. CANTO III .. 14

YE kind transporters of th' excursive soul!
Ye visions! that when night enwraps the pole,
The lively wanderer to new worlds convey,
Escaping from her heavy house of clay,
How could the gentle spirit, foe to strife,
Bear without you this coil of waking life?
Its grief-embittered cares, its joyless mirth,
And all the flat realities of earth?
Sweet phantoms! you the glowing hope inspire
You give to beauty charms, to fancy fire,
When, soaring like the eagle's kindred frame,
The poet dreams of everlasting fame;
Or, tickled by the feather of the dove,
The softer virgin dreams of endless love.

There was a time, when fortune's bright decrees
Were seen to realize such dreams as these:
Now dangerous visions the fond mind decoy
Vainly to pant for unexisting joy,
While belles and bards with mournful sighs exclaim,
Mortality has seiz'd both Love and Fame.

Ah, fair SERENA! might the boast be ours
To clear from such a charge these heavenly powers!
Blest! might thy bard deserve in Fame to see
A guard as faithful as Love proves to thee!
Blest! if that airy being gild his life,
Who sav'd thee trembling on the brink of strife,
And now, kind prompter of thy nightly dream,
Fill'd thy rapt spirit with her sacred beam!
For soon as slumber set thy soul at large,
Thy guardian power revisited her charge;
And, lightly hovering o'er th' illumined bed,
Thus with fond smiles of approbation said:
"Well hast thou past, sweet maid! one trying scene,
One fiery ordeal of the tyrant Spleen:

Thus, my SERENA, may thy force sustain
Each harder trial that may yet remain!
Against the fiend to fortify thy soul,
By useful knowledge of her dark control,
I come to shew thee, what no mortal eye,
Save thine, was e'er permitted to descry;
The realms, where Spleen's infernal agents goad
The ghostly tenants of her drear abode.
Now summon all thy strength! throw fear aside,
And firmly trust in thy ethereal guide!"

She spoke: and thro' the night's surrounding shade
Th' obedient nymph, not unappall'd, convey'd;
Thro' long, long tracts of darkness, on they past
With speed, that struck the trembling maid aghast,
Till now, recovering by degrees, she found
Her firm foot press upon the solid ground.
Encourag'd by her guide, at length she tries
To search the gloomy scene with anxious eyes.

* " Thro' me ye pass to Spleen's terrific dome,
Thro' me, to Discontent's eternal home:
Thro' me, to those who sadden'd human life,
By sullen humour, or vexatious strife;
And here, thro' scenes of endless vapours hurl'd,
Are punish'd in the forms they plagued the world;
Justly they feel no joy, who none bestow,
All ye who enter, every hope forego!"
O'er an arch'd cavern, rough with horrid stone,
On which a feeble light by flashes shone,
These characters, that chill'd her soul with dread,
SERENA, fixt in silent wonder read.
As she began to speak, her voice was drown'd
By the shrill echo of far other sound:

E

* Per me si va nella citta dolente
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore,
Per me si va tra la perduta gente,
* * * * *
Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' intrate.
Queste parole di colore oscuro
Vid' io scritte al sommo d' una porta.
DANTE, Inferno. 3.

Forth from the portal lamentable cries
Of wailing infants, without number rise.
Compassion to this poor and piteous flock
Led the kind nymph still nearer to the rock.
The pining band within she now espied,
And, touch'd with tender indignation, cried,
" How could these little forms, of life so brief,
Deserve this dire abode of lasting grief?"
" —Well may thy gentle heart be sore concern'd
At sight so moving," the mild Sprite return'd:
" Thou seest in those, whose wailings wound thy ears,
The puny progeny of modern peers:
Their sires, by avarice or ambition led,
Aliens to love, approach'd the nuptial bed;
With proud indifference, and with cold distaste;
Their homely brides reluctantly embrac'd,
And by such union gave disastrous birth
To these poor pale incumbrances of earth,
Who, bred in vanity, with pride their dower,
Were Spleen's sure victims from their natal hour,

And in their splendid cradles pul'd and pin'd,
Till Fate their ill-spun thread of life untwin'd,
And to this vestibule convey'd their ghosts,
To form the vanguard of th' infernal hosts.
But let not pity's ineffectual charm
Impede thy progress, or thy strength disarm!
Follow and fear not! guarded by my care
From all the phantoms that around thee glare."

She spoke: and enter'd, ere the nymph replied,
A pass, that open'd in the cavern's side,
Low, dark, and rocky—with her body bent,
SERENA followed down the dire descent.
A sudden light soon struck her dazzled view;
But 'twas a light of such infernal hue,
As double horror to the darkness gave,
With dread reflection from a dusky wave.
Round a black water tatter'd spectres stand,
With each a tiny taper in its hand;

Fierce mendicants! who strive some alms to win
From the fair stranger, with incessant din.
The guardian Spirit saw SERENA grieve,
To hear of wants, she knew not to relieve;
And to the generous nymph in pity cries:
" The gulf of Indolence before us lies,
O'er whose dull flood, to which no bank is seen,
A boat must waft thee to the dome of Spleen.
These pallid figures that around thee press,
And haunt thee with importunate distress,
On earth were beggars of each different class,
Tho' blended here in one promiscuous mass,
The poor, who spurn'd kind Industry's control,
The rich, who begg'd from penury of soul:
Both by their abject pride alike debas'd,
Blasphem'd that nature which they both disgrac'd;
And, hither by the sullen fiend convey'd,
Here still they ply their ineffectual trade:
In chase of each new passenger they run,
Condemn'd to beg from all, to gain by none.

But from these wretches turn thy fruitless care,
Behold the gulf before thee, and beware!
Nor touch the stream, which mortal sense o'ercomes,
And by its baleful charm the soul benumbs!"
" —Can mortal pass!" the shudd'ring nymph replied,
" This sullen, slow, unnavigable tide,
In whose black current this enormous mound
Of shapeless stone appears, this horrid bound,
That seems an everlasting guard to keep
O'er the dull waters that beneath it creep?"

While yet she spoke, with a resounding shock,
Forth from the arch of the impending rock,
Which o'er the murmuring eddy hung so low,
The lazy river scarce had room to flow,
Of rude construction, and in roughest plight,
A boat now issu'd to SERENA'S sight;
An empty boat, that slowly to the shore
Advanc'd, without the aid of sail or oar;

Self-mov'd it seem'd, but soon the nymph beheld
A grisly figure, who the stern impell'd.
Wading behind, the horrid form appear'd;
Above the water his strong arm he rear'd,
And cross the creeping flood the crazy vessel steer'd.
The heavenly Sprite observ'd her trembling ward,
Whose growing fears the hideous pass abhorr'd,
And cheering thus she spake: "This spectre boasts
The chief dominion of these dreary coasts:
To him, thy pilot, without dread, consign
And place thy body in his bark supine!
So thro' this arching rock advance alone,
Safe from the perils of th' incumbent stone:
Embark undaunted!—on the farther side
Expect to find me, thy unfailing guide.
Nor let this pilot raise thy groundless dread,
This sullen Charon of the froward dead,
A phantom, never blest with human life,
Tho' oft on earth his noxious power is rife;

And in that region, ne'er from error free,
The words he dictates are assign'd to me.
Observe this fiend, that Nature scorn'd to frame,
Offspring of Pride, and Apathy his name!
Passions he ne'er can feel, and ne'er impart,
A mis-created imp, without a heart;
In place of which his subtle parent pinn'd
A bladder, fill'd with circulating wind,
Which seems with mimic life the mass to warm,
And gives false vigour to his bloated form.
But place thee in the boat his arms direct,
My love shall watch thee, and my power protect."

So spake the friendly Sprite; th' obedient maid
Her form along the narrow vessel laid:
But oh! what terrors shake her tender soul,
As from the shore the bark begins to roll,
And, sever'd from her friend, her eyes discern
The steering spectre wading at the stern!
Far stronger fears her resolution melt,
Than those, which erst the bard of Florence felt,

When, by the honour'd shade of Virgil led,
Thro' all the dreary circles of the dead,
Hell's fiercest demons threaten'd to divide
The living poet from his shadowy guide;
And bade him, friendless, and alone, return,
Thro' the dire horrors of the dark sojourn.
Not long the lovely fair one's terrors last;
For safely thro' th' impending rock she past:
And slow advancing to the gloomy strand,
The sullen pilot brings her safe to land.
There, fondly hovering on her guardian plumes,
The heavenly Monitor her charge resumes;
And smiling, leads along the rocky road,
Whose windings open into Spleen's abode.

Thou queen of shades! whose spirit-damping spell
Too oft is seen the poet's pride to quell,
May I, unpunish'd by thy subtle power,
Dare to display thy subterranean bower,
And to this wond'ring upper world explain
The shadowy horrors of thy secret reign!

Canto III. Verse 201

Marcus Flaxman inv & del

W. Blake sc

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Entering beneath a wide fantastic arch,
Round the drear circuit of the dome they march;
Which a pale flash from many a fiery sprite
Frequent illumes with intermitting light;
Such as on earth, to Superstition's eye,
Denounces ruin from the northern sky,
While she discerns, amid the nightly glare,
Armies embattled in the blazing air.

Around the nymph unnumber'd phantoms glide;
Here swell the bloated race of bulky Pride;
In close and horrid union, there appear
The wilder progeny of frantic Fear;
Mis-shapen monsters! whose stupendous frame
Abhorrent Nature has refus'd to name.
Here, in cameleon colours, lightly flit
The motley offspring of disorder'd Wit.
All things prodigious the wide cave contain'd,
And forms, beyond what fable ever feign'd:
But, as the worm, that on the dewy green
Springs half to view, and half remains unseen,

Perceiving near its cell a human tread,
Slinks back to earth, and hides its timid head:
So, where the heavenly Spirit deign'd to lead,
The startled spectres from her step recede;
And, as abash'd they from her eye retire,
Sink into mist, or melt in fluid fire.
High on an ebon throne, superbly wrought
With each fierce figure of fantastic thought,
In a deep cove, where no bright beam intrudes,
O'er her black schemes the sullen empress brood:
The screech-owl's mingled with the raven's plume
Shed o'er her furrow'd brows an awful gloom:
A garb, that glares with stripes of lurid flame,
Wraps in terrific pomp her haggard frame;
Round her a serpent, as her zone, is roll'd,
Which, writhing, stings itself in every fold.

Near her pavilion, in barbaric state,
Four mutes the mandates of their queen await
From sickly Fancy bred, by sullen Sloth,
Both parents' curse, yet pamper'd still by br

First stands Disease; an hag of magic power,
Varying her frightful visage every hour,
Her horrors heightening as those changes last,
And each new form more hideous than the past.
Detraction next, a shapeless fiend, appears,
Whose shrivell'd hand a misty mirror rears;
Fram'd by malignant Art, th' infernal toy
Inverts the lovely mien of smiling Joy,
Robs roseate Beauty of attractive grace,
And gives a step-dame's frown to Nature's face.
The third in place, but with a fiercer air,
See the true Gorgon, Disappointment, glare!
By whose petrific power Delight's o'erthrown,
And Hope's warm heart becomes an icy stone,
Last, in a gorgeous robe, that ill bestow'd,
Bows her mean body by its cumbrous load,
Stands fretful Discontent, of fiends the worst,
By dignity debas'd, by blessings curst,
Who poisons Pleasure with the sourest leaven,
And makes a hell of Love's ecstatic heaven.

The guide celestial, near this ghastly group,
Perceiv'd her tender charge with terror droop:
"Fear not, sweet maid!" she cries, "my steps pursue,
Nor gaze too long on this infernal crew!
Turn from Detraction's fascinating glass!
In silence cross the throne! observe, and pass!
Beyond this dome, the palace of the queen,
Her empire winds thro' many a dreary scene,
Where she torments, as their deserts require,
Her various victims that on earth expire;
Each class apart: for in a different cell
The fierce, the fretful, and the sullen dwell:
These shalt thou slightly view, in vapours hurl'd,
And swiftly then regain thy native world.
But first remark, within that ample niche,
With every quaint device of splendor rich,
Yon phantom, who, from vulgar eyes withdrawn,
Appears to stretch in one eternal yawn:
Of empire here he holds the tottering helm,
Prime minister in Spleen's discordant realm,

The pillar of her spreading state, and more,
Her darling offspring, whom on earth she bore;
For, as on earth his wayward mother stray'd,
Grandeur, with eyes of fire, her form survey'd,
And with strong passion starting from his throne,
Unloos'd the sullen queen's reluctant zone.
From his embrace, conceiv'd in moody joy,
Rose the round image of a bloated boy:
His nurse was Indolence; his tutor, Pomp!
Restrain'd the child from every childish romp;
They rear'd their nursling to the bulk you see,
And his proud parents call'd their imp ENNUI.
This realm he rules, and in superb attire
Visits each earthly palace of his sire:
A thousand shapes he wears, now pert, now prim,
Pursues each grave conceit, or idle whim;
In arms, in arts, in government engages,
With monarchs, poets, politicans, sages;
But drops each work, as it is just begun,
And, trying all things can accomplish none.

Yet o'er each rank, and age, and sex, his sway
Spreads undiscern'd, and makes the world his prey,
The light coquet, amid flirtation, sighs,
To find him lurk in Pleasure's vain disguise;
And the grave nun discovers, in her cell,
That holy water but augments his spell.
As the strange monster of the serpent breed,
That haunts, as travellers tell, the marshy mead,
Devours each nobler beast, tho' firmly grown
To size and strength superior to his own;—
For on the grazing horse, or larger bull,
Subtly he springs, of dark saliva full,
With swiftly-darting tongue his prey anoints
With venom, potent to dissolve its joints,
And, while its bulk in liquid poison swims,
Swallows its melting bone and fluid limbs:—
So this Ennui, this wonder-working elf,
Can vanquish powers far mightier than himself:
Nor Wit nor Science soar his reach above,
And oft he seizes on successful Love.

Of all the radiant host who lend their aid
To light mankind thro' life's bewildering shade,
Bright Charity alone with cloudless ray,
May boast exemption from his baleful sway:
Haste then, sweet nymph! nor let us longer roam
Round the drear circle of this dangerous dome!
Lest e'en thy guide entangled in his spell,
Should fail to guard thee from a fiend so fell!"

So speaking, the kind Spirit's anxious care
Led from the palace the attentive fair,
And winding thro' a passage dark and rude,
Thus the mild monitor her speech renew'd:
" 'Gainst fear and pity now thy bosom steel,
For sights more horrible I now reveal!
Spleen's tortur'd victims view with dauntless eyes;
For lo! her penal realms before thee rise!"
The nymph advancing saw, with mute amaze,
A dismal, deep, enormous dungeon blaze.
Stones of red fire the hideous wall compose,
And massive gates the horrid confine close.

Th' infernal portress of this doleful dome,
With fiery lips that swell'd with poisonous foam,
Pale Discord, rag'd; with whose tormenting tongue,
Thro' all its caves th' extensive region rung:
A iving vulture was the fury's crest,
And in her hand a rattle-snake she prest,
Whose angry joints incessantly were heard
To sound defiance to the screaming bird.

" The boundless depth of this dire prison holds
The untam'd spirits of imperious scolds:
Nor think that females only fill the cave!
Male termagants have liv'd, and here they rave.
Polemics, who of peace with rancour preach,
And violate themselves the law they teach.
All of each sex are pent within this pale,
Who knew no use of language but to rail."
Thus to her charge exclaim'd the heavenly guide,
And, as she spoke, the portals open'd wide,
And to th' observance of the shuddering maid,
Th' immeasurable den was all display'd.

But oh! what various noises from within
Fill the vext air with one stupendous din!
Mourning's deep groan, and Anger's furious call,
Terror's loud cry, and Affectation's squall,
The sob of Passion, the hysteric scream,
And shrieks of Frenzy, in its fierce extreme!
In this wild uproar every sound's combin'd,
That stuns the senses, and distracts the mind.
"Mark" (to the nymph SOPHROSYNE began)
"The fierce Xantippe flaming in the van,
The vase she emptied on the sage's head,
Hangs o'or her own, a different shower to shed;
For, drop by drop, distilling liquid fire,
It fills the vixen with new tropes of ire.

Beyond the Grecian dame extend your view
And mark the spectre of a modern shrew!
She, who whene'er she din'd, with furious look,
Spurn'd her nice food, and bellow'd at her cook,
Here justly feels a culinary rack,
Bound, like Ixion, to a whirling jack."

SERENA gaz'd, but soon she turn'd away,
Mute with disgust, and shuddering with dismay.
"To scenes less hideous let us now repair:"
(Said the kind guard of the dejected fair)
And, cheering her faint charge, her step she led
To the near dwelling of the fretful dead.

Of dusky adamant, the dungeon rose;
A dingy mirror its dark sides compose,
Reflecting, with a thousand quaint grimaces,
The pale inhabitants' distorted faces.
"Here, like a dame of quality array'd,
Sits Peevishness, presiding o'er the shade,
And frowning at her own uncomely mien,
Whose coarse reflection on the wall is seen.
A snarling lap-dog her right-hand restrains,
Her lap an infant porcupine contains,
Which, while her fondness tries its wrath to still,
Wounds her each moment with a pointed quill,
The froward spirits here in durance fret,
Whose testy life was one continued pet:

Here they in trifles that vexation find,
Which teas'd on earth, their irritated mind.
Observe the phantom, who with eyes askance
Still to the mirror turns her eager glance!
See! to her cheek, incessant as she turns,
Her vex'd blood rushes, and her visage burns.
Beauty for lasting bliss had form'd the maid;
Love to her charms his faithful homage paid;
But, all this swelling tide of joy to check,
A fatal freckle rises on her neck:
Her soft cosmetics the griev'd nymph applies,
Success attends her, and the freckle dies:
But ah! this victory avails her not;
She finds an hydra in the teazing spot;
Fast as one flies, another still succeeds,
And with eternal food her fretful humour feeds.

Near to the nymph, in a more moody fit,
See the pale phantom of a peevish wit!
Mark with what frowns his eager eyes peruse,
Wet from the press, three Critical Reviews!

With wounded vanity's distracting rage
How rapidly he runs thro' every page!
He finds some honours lavish'd on his verse,
And joy's faint gleams his gloomy spirit pierce.
But oh! too soon these feeble sparks decay;
And keen vexation re-assumes her prey.
Hating reproof, in every fibre sore,
One censur'd particle torments him more,
More than a hundred happier lines delight,
Which liberal favour condescends to cite.

But time will fail us, if we pause to view
The various torments of the testy crew;
Those wretched chemists, whose o'erheated brai
Extracts from nothing—a substantial pain.
Yet, ere to different districts we advance,
Take of one fretful tribe a transient glance!
Their unsuspected punishments supply
A lesson—useful to the female eye.
Spleen's liveliest agent here beguiles the gay,
Fair to attract, and flattering to betray."

As thus the kind ætherial guardian spoke,
Within a rock, whence plaintive murmurs broke,
She touch'd a secret spring, whose power was such,
Two jarring doors unfolded at the touch,
And, with the charms of regal splendor bright,
A cheerful banquet sparkles to the sight,
Viands so light, so elegantly grac'd,
Might tempt e'en Temperance herself to taste;
For fruits alone compos'd th' enticing treat,
Fair to the eye, and to the palate sweet.
In such bright juice the peach and cherry swim,
As make the topaz and the ruby dim.
Here, crown'd with every flower, and gaily drest
In all the glitter of a Gallic vest,
Whose ample folds her loathsome body screen'd,
A child of luxury reigns—a subtle fiend!
Who, with a grace that every heart allures,
Smiles on the lustre of her rich *liqueurs*.
Her fatal smiles their utmost power exert
To poison beauty at her dire dessert;

To blast the rose that health's bright cheek adorns,
And fill each festive heart with latent thorns:
For the sly fiend, of every art possest,
Steals on th' affection of her female guest;
And, by her soft address seducing each,
Eager she plies them with a brandy peach:
They, with keen lip, the luscious fruit devour;
But swiftly feel its peace-destroying power.
Quick thro' each vein new tides of frenzy roll:
All evil passions kindle in the soul,
Drive from each feature every cheerful grace,
And glare ferocious in the sallow face;
The wounded nerves in furious conflict tear,
Then sink, in blank dejection and despair.
Effects more dire, thus tempting to deceive,
The apple wrought not in the soul of Eve;
Howe'er disguis'd, in jelly or in jam,
Spleen has no poison surer than a dram.

"But haste we now," (the heavenly leader cries)
"To where this penal world's last wonder lies!"

She spoke; and led the nymph thro' deeper dells,
Low murmuring vaults, and horror-breathing cells.
And now they pass a perforated cage,
Where rancorous spectres without number rage,
"Avert thine eye!" (the heavenly spirit said)
"Nor view these abject tribes of envious dead!
Who pin'd to hear the voice of truth proclaim
A sister's beauty, or a brother's fame!
Tho' crown'd with all prosperity imparts
High in their various ranks, and several arts;
Yet, meanly sunk by Envy's base control;
They died in that consumption of the soul;
And here, thro' bars that twisted adders make,
And the long volumes of th' envenom'd snake,
O'er this dark road they dart an anxious eye,
Still envying every fiend that flutters by.
Pass! and regard them not!"—Th' attentive maid
In silent tremor the behest obey'd.

This dungeon crost, her weary feet she drags
Thro' winding caverns, and o'er icy crags:

Soul-chilling damps in the dark passage reign,
Which issues on a vast and dreary plain,
Fann'd by no breezes, with no verdure crown'd;
The black horizon is its only bound.
And now advancing, in a drizzly mist,
Thro' sullen phantoms, hating to exist,
SERENA spies, high o'er his subjects plac'd,
The ghastly tyrant of the gloomy waste.
Murmuring he sits upon a rocking stone,
Th' unstable base of his ill-founded throne:
Hideous his face, and horrible his fame,
Misanthropy—the grisly monster's name!
Him to fierce Pride, with raging passion sore,
The frowning gorgon, Disappointment, bore;
On earth detested, and by heaven abhorr'd,
Of this drear wild he reigns—the moody lord.
Few are the subjects of his waste domain,
And scarce a female in his frightful train,
Except one changing corps of ancient prudes
Reluctant here the prying band intrudes.

Each, who on earth, behind her artful fan,
Feign'd coarse aversion to the creature—man,
Is doom'd, in this dark region to abide
Some transient pains for hypocritic pride.
Here ever-during chains those scoffers bind,
Whose writings deaden and debase the mind;
Who mock creation with injurious scorn,
And feel a fancied void in plenty's horn.

In his right hand, an emblem of his cares,
A branch of aconite the monarch bears;
And those sour phantoms, who this region haunt,
He feeds with berries from this deadly plant;
For, strange to tell! tho' sever'd from its root,
The bough still blackens with successive fruit.
The tribes, who taste it, burst into a fit
Of raving mockery and rancorous wit;
And pleas'd their tyrant's ghastly smile to court,
By vile distortions make him various sport.
The frantic rabble, who his sway confess,
Before his throne an hideous puppet dress;

When in unseemly rags they have array'd
The image, from their own dark semblance made;
In horid gambols round their work they throng,
With antic dance and rude discordant song;
Satire's rank offals on the block they fling,
And call it nature, to delight their king:
While in their features he exults to see
The frowns of torture, mixt with grins of glee.
For, as these abject toils engage the crew,
Their own grim idol darkens to their view;
Wide and more wide its horrid stature spreads,
And o'er the tribe new consternation sheds;
For each forgets, in his bewilder'd gaze,
'Tis but a monster, which he help'd to raise.
As o'er its form their dizzy glances roll,
It strikes a cheerless damp thro' all the soul.
Vainly to shun the baleful sight they try,
It draws for ever the reluctant eye:
At each review with deeper dread they start;
A colder chaos numbs each freezing heart.

No mutual confidence, no friendly care,
Relieves the panic they are doom'd to bear;
For as they shrink absorb'd in wild affright,
When each to each inclines his wounded sight,
They feel, for social comfort, sour disgust,
And all the sullen anguish of distrust.

Around these wretches in the drear abode,
The ghastly grinning fiend Derision rode,
Who to their wayward minds on earth supplied,
Perverted ridicule's malignant tide.
His steed of Pegasus the semblance bore;
But with false wings that knew not how to soar:
Where'er he pass'd, with mischief in his look,
A sounding whip of knotted snakes he shook:
And laugh'd in lashing each pretended sage,
Whose malice wore the mask of moral rage.
An uncouth bugle his left hand display'd,
From a grey monkey's skull by Cunning made,
And form'd to pour, in harmony's despite,
Sounds that each jarring sense of pain excite;

And now his livid lips the bugle blow;
Thro' every den the piercing discord flew:
The fiends all answered in one hideous yell,
And in a fearful trance SERENA fell.
Hence from the lovely nymph her senses fled,
Till thro' the parted curtains of her bed,
The amorous sun, who now began to rise,
Kist, with a sportive beam, her opening eyes.

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

1 .. CANTO IV .. 16

HAIL, thou enlighten'd globe of human joy!
Where social cares the soften'd heart employ:
What cheering rays of vital comfort dart
In thy bright regions thro' the rescued heart,
Which 'scaping from the dark remains of Spleen,
Springs with new warmth to thy attractive scene!
Once more I bless thy pleasure-breathing gale,
And gaze enchanted on thy flowery vale,
Where smiling innocence, and ardent youth,
Sport hand in hand with beauty and with truth.
Sport on, sweet revellers! in rosy bowers,
Safe from the intrusion of all evil powers!
Ah fruitless wish of the benignant Muse,
Which to this chequer'd world the Fates refuse!
For round its precincts many an ugly sprite
Speeds undiscern'd to poison pure delight:

Amidst the foremost of this haggard band,
Unwearied poster of the sea and land,
Wrapt in dark mists malignant Scandal flies,
While Envy's poison'd breath the buoyant supplies.
Tho' SHERIDAN, with shafts of comic wit,
Pierc'd, and expos'd her to the laughing pit,
Th' immortal hag still wears her paper crown,
The dreaded empress of the idle town:
O'erleaping her prerogative of old,
To sink the noble, to defame the bold;—
In chase of worth to slip the dogs of strife,
Thro' all the ample range of public life;—
The tyrant now, the sanctuary burst,
Where happiness by privacy is nurst,
Her fury rising as her powers increase,
O'erturns the altars of domestic peace.
Pleas'd in her dark and gall-distilling cloud,
The sportive form of innocence to shroud,
Beauty's young train her baleful eyes survey,
To mark the fairest, as her favourite prey.

Hence, sweet SERENA, while thy spirit stray'd
Round the deep realms of subterranean shade,
This keenest agent of th' infernal powers
On earth was busied, in those tranquil hours,
To blast thy peace, and poison'd darts to aim
Against the honour of thy spotless name:
For Scandal, restless fiend, who never knows
The balmy blessing of an hour's repose,
Worn, yet unsated with her daily toil,
In her base work consumes the midnight oil.
O'er fiercer fiends when heavy slumbers creep,
When wearied avarice and ambition sleep,
Scandal is vigilant, and keen to spread
The plagues that spring from her prolific head.
On truth's fair basis she her falsehood builds,
With tinsel sentiment its surface gilds;
To nightly labour from their dark abodes
The demons of the groaning press she goads,
And smiles to see their rapid art supply,
Ten thousand wings to every infant lie.

In triumph now behold the hag applaud
Her keen and fav'rite imp, ingenious Fraud,
Her quick compositor, whose flying hand
Has clos'd the paragraph she keenly plann'd.
No nymph she nam'd, yet mark'd her vile intent,
That dullness could not miss the name she meant:
In satire's tints the injur'd fair she drew,
In form an angel, but in soul a Jew.

It chanc'd her sire among his friends inroll'd
A wealthy senator, infirm and old;
Who, dup'd too early by a generous heart,
Rashly assum'd a misanthropic part:
Tho' peevish fancies would his mind incrust,
Good-nature's image lurk'd beneath their rust;
And gay SERENA, with that sportive wit,
Which heals the folly that it deigns to hit,
Would oft the sickness of his soul beguile,
And teach the sullen humourist to smile;
Pleas'd by her virtuous frolics to assuage
The mental anguish of distemper'd age.

This ancient friend, in a sarcastic sketch,
Was mark'd by Scandal as a monied wretch,
For whom the young, yet mercenary fair
Had subtly spread a matrimonial snare.
With such base matter more diffusely wrought,
The spirit-piercing paragraph was fraught,
O'er which with glee the eye of Scandal glar'd,
Which for the opening press herself prepar'd;
She on the types her inky wad let fall,
And smear'd each letter with her bitterest gall;
The press, whose ready gripe the charge receives,
Stamps it successive on ten thousand leaves,
Which pil'd in heaps impatient seem to lie:
They only wait the dawn of day to fly.

Now, as the child, in lonely chamber laid,
Mute in the dark, and of itself afraid,
When, haply conscious of the pain it feels,
The watchful mother to its pillow steals,
Springs to her breast, and shakes off all alarms,
Feeling its safety in her fostering arms;

With such quick joy, in innocence as young,
The soft SERENA from her pillow sprung,
Pleas'd to awake from her terrific dream,
And feel the cheerful sun's returning beam.
Eager she rose, in busy thought, nor staid
The wonted summons of her punctual maid,
And as her own fair hands adjust her vest,
The guardian cincture flutters on her breast:
For fondly, when she wak'd, or when she slept,
Still round her heart th' important zone she kept.
Thou happy girdle! to thy charge be just!
Firm be thy threads, and faithful to their trust;
For hours approach, when all the stores they hide
Of magic virtue, must be strongly tried!—
Now, while her kind domestic heart intends
To please her early sire, the nymph descends;
But sleep, who left the fair with sudden flight,
With late wings hover'd o'er the good old knight:
And the chill circle of the lone saloon
Informs the shiv'ring maid she rose too soon.

'Tis true, attentive John's unfailing care
Began the rites of breakfast to prepare;
But yet no fires on the cold altar burn,
No smoke arises from the silver urn,
And the blank tea-board, where no viands lay,
Only supplied the paper of the day.

Tho' mild SERENA's peace-devoted mind
The keen debate of politics declin'd,
And heard with cold contempt, or generous hate,
The frauds of party, and the lies of state;
Nor car'd much more for fashion's loose intrigues,
Than factious bickerings or foreign leagues;
Yet, while she saunters idle and alone,
Her careless eyes are on the paper thrown.

As some gay youth, whom sportive friends engage
To view the furious Ourang in his cage,
If while amus'd he sees the monster grin,
And trusts too careless to the bolts within,

If the sly beast, as near the grate he draws,
Tear him unguarded with projected paws,
Starts at the wound, and feels his bosom thrill
With pain and wonder at the sudden ill:
So did SERENA start, so wildly gaze,
In such mixt pangs of anguish and amaze,
Feeling the wound which Scandal had design'd
To lacerate her mild and modest mind.
Startled, as one who from electric wire
Unheeding catches unsuspected fire,
She reads, then almost doubts that she has read,
And thinks some vision hovers round her head;
Now, her fixt eye some striking words confine,
And now she darts it thrice thro' every line;
Nor could amazement more her senses shake,
Had every letter been a Gorgon's snake.
Now rising indignation takes its turn,
And her flush'd cheeks with tingling blushes burn!
With restless motion and with many a frown,
Thro' the wide room she paces up and down

Now, musing, makes a momentary stand,
The fatal paper fluttering in her hand.
So the shy bird, by cruel sportsmen sprung,
And by their random fire severely stung,
Scar'd, not disabled, by the distant wound,
Now trembling flies, now skims along the ground,
Now vainly tries, in some sequester'd spot,
From her gor'd breast to shake the galling shot.

Ye tender nymphs! whose kindling souls would flame,
Touch'd, like SERENA'S, by injurious blame,
O let your quick and kindred spirits form
A vivid picture of the mental storm
In which she labour'd, and whose force to paint
The Muse's strongest tints appear too faint!
In sympathetic thought her suffering see!
But O, for ever, from such wrongs be free!

Her faithful girdle try'd its power to save,
And oft a monitory impulse gave;

Still unregarded, still unfelt, it prest
With useless energy her heaving breast,
Her mind, forgetful of the magic zone,
Full of the burning shaft, by Scandal thrown,
With blended notes of sorrow and disdain,
Thus in disorder'd language vents its pain :—
"Had Malice dar'd my honour to defame,
The self-refuted lie had lost its aim:
But here the world, deceiv'd by sland'rous art,
Must think SERENA has a venal heart."
A venal heart! at that detested sound,
In swelling anguish her sunk voice was drown'd.
Now was a fearful crisis of her fate:
Distended now by passion's growing weight,
And for its mistress fill'd with conscious dread,
The magic girdle crack'd thro' every thread,
And snapp'd perchance by Scandal's force accurst,
From her full heart the guardian zone had burst;
And, spite of all the virtues of the fair,
The spell of happiness had sunk in air,

But that SOPHROSYNE, whose friendly fear
Timely foresaw this trial too severe,
An early succour gain'd from secret Love,
From the fell kite to snatch the falling dove.

As Nature studies, in her wide domain,
To blend some antidote with every bane;
Thus her kind aid the friendly power contriv'd,
That, from the quarter, whence the wound arriv'd,
There flow'd, the anguish of that wound to calm,
A soothing, soft, and medicinal balm.
As in her agitated hand, the fair
Wav'd the loose paper with disorder'd air,
In capitals she saw SERENA flame:
She blush'd, she shudder'd, as she view'd the name:
Her ready fears subside in new surprise,
And eager thus she reads with lighten'd eyes:
"Go, faithful sonnet, to SERENA say
What charms peculiar in her features reign!
A stranger, whom her glance may ne'er survey,
Pays her this tribute in no flattering strain.

Tell her, the bard, in beauty's wide domain,
Has seen a virgin cheek as richly glow,
A bosom, where the blue meandering vein
Sheds as soft lustre thro' the lucid snow,
Eyes, that as brightly flash with joy and youth,
And locks, that like her own luxuriant flow!
Then say, for then she cannot doubt thy truth,
That the wide earth no female form can show
Where Nature's legend so distinctly tells,
In this fair shrine a fairer spirit dwells."

With curious wonder, the reviving maid
View'd this fond homage to her beauty paid;
A second glance o'er every line she cast,
And half pronounc'd and half suppress'd the last,
While modest pleasure, and ingenuous pride,
Her burning cheek with deeper crimson dy'd.

Oh Praise! thy language was by Heaven design'
As manna to the faint bewilder'd mind:

Beauty and Diffidence, whose hearts rejoice
In the kind comfort of thy cheering voice,
In this wild wood of life, wert thou not nigh,
Must, like the wandering babes, lie down and die:
But thy sweet accents wake new vital powers,
And make this thorny path—a path of flowers.
As oil, on ocean's troubled waters spread,
Smooths the rough billow to a level bed,
The soothing rhyme thus soften'd into rest
The painful tumult of SERENA's breast.

Now, to herself restor'd, the conscious maid
The lurking fiend's insidious snare survey'd;
Her nerves, with grateful trepidation, own
A slighter pressure from the faithful zone;
And in fond thought, she breathes a thankful prayer
For her ætherial guardian's constant care;
Yet with a keen desire her bosom glow'd
To hear from whom the gentle sonnet flow'd;
But kind SOPHROSYNE, who watch'd unseen,
To shield her votary from the wiles of Spleen,

As friendly Love had fixt a future time,
When to reveal the secret of the rhyme,
Strove till that hour her fancy to restrain,
Nor let her anxious wishes rise to pain.

As gaiety's fresh tide began to roll,
Fast in the swelling channel of her soul,
The good old knight descends, tho' eager, slow,
The gout still tingling in his tender toe;
And now, paternal salutations past,
His eyes he keenly on the paper cast,
While his sweet daughter, with attentive grace,
Before him flies his ready cup to place;
For tea and politics alternate share,
In friendly rivalship, his morning care.
Tho' smooth as oil the knight's good-humour flows,
When the mild breeze of pleasant fortune blows,
Yet quick to catch the casual sparks of ire,
Like oil it kindles into mounting fire;
And fiercely now his flaming spirit blaz'd,
While on those galling words he wildly gaz'd,

Whose force had almost work'd into a storm
The gentler elements in Beauty's form.
As the sarcastic sentence caught his view,
Back from the board his elbow-chair he drew,
And, by sharp stings of sudden fury prick'd,
Far from his foot his gouty stool he kick'd.
Fierce as Achilles, by Atrides stung,
He pour'd the stream of vengeance from his tongue.
But ah, those angry threats he deign'd to speak,
Had sounds, alas! far differing from the Greek.
Rage from his lips in legal language broke;
Of juries and of damages he spoke,
And on the printer's law-devoted head
He threaten'd deep revenge in terms most dread;
Terms that with pain the ear of Beauty pierce,
And oaths too rough to harmonize in verse.

While thus the good old knight, with passion hot,
His toast neglected, and his tea forgot,
The discord of the drama to increase,
Now prim PENELOPE assails her niece;

For, as Sir GILBERT now, with choler dumb,
Points her the period with his angry thumb,
" Ah! brother," cries the stiff, malignant crone,
(Her sharp eye swiftly thro' the sentence thrown)
" Scandal could never rise to heights like this,
But from the manners of each modern Miss;
Had but my niece, less giddy and more grave,
Observ'd the prudent hints I often gave——"

The honest knight her vile conclusion saw,
And quick curtail'd it with a testy 'Pshaw!"
Meanwhile the gentle maid, who heard the taun
Survey'd without a frown her prudish aunt;
Far other thoughts employed her softer mind,
To one sweet purpose all her soul inclin'd;
How she might close th' unpleasant scene, how
Restore good humour to her father's breast.
Her airy guardian with delight survey'd
These tender wishes in the lovely maid,
And, to accomplish what her heart desir'd,
Trains of new thought above her age inspir'd.

W. Blake

As Venus on her son's enlighten'd face,
Shed richer charms, and more attractive grace,
When issuing forth from the dissolving cloud,
His bright form burst on the admiring crowd:
So kind SOPHROSYNE, unseen, supplies
A livelier radiance to SERENA's eyes;
And, ere she speaks, to captivate her sire,
Touches her lips with patriotic fire.

It chanc'd, that toss'd upon a vacant chair,
A volume of that wit lay near the fair,
Whose value, try'd by Fashion's varying touch,
Once rose too high, and now is sunk too much;
The book, which Fortune plac'd within her reach,
Contain'd, O CHESTERFIELD, the liberal speech
In which thy spirit, like an Attic sage
Strove to defend the violated stage
From fetters basely forg'd by ministerial rage.
From this the nymph her useful lesson took,
And thus began, reclining on the book:—
"If on this noble lord we may rely,
Scandal is but a speck on Freedom's eye;

And public spirit, then, will rather bear
The casual pain it gives by growing there,
Than, by a rash attempt to move it thence,
Hazard the safety of a precious sense,
And, by the efforts of a vain desire,
Rob this life-darting eye of all its fire.
Tho' the pure breast of Innocence may smart;
By cruel Calumny's corroding dart,
Yet would she rather ache in every nerve,
And bear those pangs she knows not to deserve,
Much rather than be made a senseless tool,
To aid the frenzy of tyrannic rule,
Or forge one dangerous bolt for Power to aim
At sacred Liberty's superior frame."——

As ancient chiefs were wont of old to gaze,
With eyes of tender awe, and fond amaze
On the fair priestess of the Delphic fane,
When first she uttered her prophetic strain,
Entranc'd in wonder, thus Sir GILBERT vi
His child, yet more inspir'd, who thus purs

" For me, I own, these lines, with gall replete,
Shot thro' my simple heart a sudden heat;
But happier thoughts my rising rage repress,
And turn'd the pointless insult to a jest:
And oh! should Slander still new wrath awake,
Still may my father, for his daughter's sake,
Disdain the vengeance of litigious strife,
And let SERENA's answer be—her life!"

She ended with a smile, whose magic flame
Shot youthful vigour thro' her father's frame:
His age, his anger, and his gout are fled;
" Enchanting girl!" with tears of joy, he said,
" Enchanting girl!" twice echoed from his tongue,
As, speaking, from his elbow chair he sprung,
" Come to thy father's arms!—By Heaven thou art
His own true offspring, and a Whig in heart."

He spoke; and his fonds arms around her curl'd
Seem'd with fond pressure to infold the world.

Her conscious heart she feels with triumph beat,
And joys to find that triumph is complete;
For stiff PENELOPE who near them stood,
" Albeit unused to the melting mood."
Squeez'd from her eye-lid one reluctant tear,
And soften'd with a smile her brow severe:
But 'twas a smile of such a gloomy grace
As lighten'd once upon Alecto's face,
When Orpheus past her, leading back to life,
From Pluto's regions, his recover'd wife,
When love connubial, join'd to music's spell,
Moisten'd with tender joy the eyes of hell.
Far other smiles, with pleasure's softest air,
Gild the gay features of the youthful fair:
She looks like sportive Spring when her young charms
Wind round her hoary sire's reluctant arms,
And by a frolic infantine embrace,
Banish the rugged frown from Winter's face.

Thro' the long day she felt the glowing tide
Of exultation thro' her bosom glide;

And oft she wish'd for slow-approaching night,
To hold sweet converse with her guardian sprite.
At length the hour arriv'd her heart desir'd,
And, in her lonely chamber now retir'd,
Her tender fancy gave the fondest scope
To ardent gratitude and eager hope.
"Dear airy being!" (the soft nymph exclaim'd)
"Whose power can break the spell that Spleen has fram'd,
Can, by the waving of thy viewless wing,
O'er darkest forms a golden radiance fling,
And make in minds, by sorriest thoughts perplext,
This moment's grief the triumph of the next;
I bless thy succour in each trial past;
Be present still, and save me in the last!"

Thus, with her lovely eyes devoutly fixt,
Where rays of hope, and fear, and reverence mixt,
The tender fair her faithful guard addrest,
Then with her cheek her downy pillow prest;

But long her wakeful lids refuse to close,
For curiosity dispels repose.
Her busy mind the mystic veil would pierce,
That hides the author of the pleasing verse;
Her lips involuntary catch the chime,
And half articulate the soothing rhyme,
Till weary thought no longer watch can keep,
But sinks reluctant in the folds of sleep.

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

THE

TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

CANTO V

WHY art thou fled, O blest poetic time!
When Fancy wrought the miracles of rhyme;
When, darting from her star-encircled throne,
Her poet's eye commanded worlds unknown;
When, by her fiat made a mimic god,
He saw existence waiting on his nod,
And at his pleasure, into being brought
New shadowy hosts—the vassals of his thought,
In Joy's gay garb, in Terror's dread array,
Darker than night, and brighter than the day:
Who at his bidding, thro' the wilds of air,
Rais'd willing mortals far from earthly care,
And led them wondering thro' his wide domain,
Beyond the bounds of Nature's narrow reign;
While their rapt spirits, in the various flight,
Shook with successive thrills of new delight?

Return, sweet season, grac'd with fiction's flower
Let not cold system cramp thy genial powers!
Shall mild Morality, in garb uncouth,
The housewife garb of plain and homely Truth,
Robb'd by stern Method of her rosy crown,
Chill her faint votaries by a wintry frown?
No; thou sweet friend of man! as suits thee be
Shine forth in Fable's rich embroider'd vest!
Oh! make my verse thy vehicle, thy arms,
To spread o'er social life thy potent charms!
And thou, SOPHROSYNE, mysterious sprite!
If haply I may trace thy steps aright,
Roving thro' paths untrod by mortal feet,
To paint for human eyes thy heavenly seat,
Shed on my soul some portion of that power,
Which sav'd SERENA in the trying hour,
To bear those trials, which, however hard,
As bards all tell us, may befall the bard:
The fop's pert jest, the critic's frown severe,
Learning's proud cant, with Envy's artful sneer

Canto V Verse 43

Maria Flaxman inv & del W Blake

And, the vext poet's last and worst disgrace,
His cold blank bookseller's rhyme-freezing face.
Hence, ye dark omens! that to Spleen belong,
Ye shall not check the current of my song,
While Beauty's lovely race, for whom I sing,
Fire my warm hand to strike the ready string.

As Quiet now her lightest mantle laid
O'er the still senses of the sleeping maid,
Her nightly visitant, her faithful guide,
Descends in all her empyrean pride;
That fairy shape no more she deigns to wear,
Whose light foot smooths the furrow plough'd by care
In mortal faces, while her tiny spear
Gives a kind tingle to the caution'd ear.
Now, in her nobler shape, of heavenly size,
She strikes her votary's soul with new surprise.
Jove's favourite daughter, arm'd with all his powers,
Appear'd less brilliant to th' attending Hours,
When on the golden car of Juno rais'd,
In heavenly pomp the queen of battles blaz'd:

With all her lustre, but without the dread
Which from her arm the frowning gorgon shed,
SOPHROSYNE descends with guardian love,
To waft her gentle ward to worlds above.
From her fair brow a radiant diadem
Rose in twelve stars, and every separate gem
Shot magic rays, of virtue to control
Some passion hostile to the human soul.
Round her sweet form a robe of æther flow'd;
And in a wonderous car the smiling Spirit rode.
Firm as pure ivory, it charm'd the sight
With finer polish and a softer white.
The hand of Beauty, with an easy swell,
Scoop'd the free concave like a bending shell;
And on its rich exterior, Art display'd
The triumphs of the Power, the car convey'd.
Here, in celestial tints, surpassing life,
Sat lovely Gentleness disarming Strife;
There, young Affection, born of tender Thought
In rosy chains the fiercer passions caught;

Ambition, with his sceptre snapt in twain,
And Avarice, scorning what his chests contain.
Round the tame vulture flies the fearless dove;
Soft Innocence embraces playful Love;
And laughing Sport, the frolic child of Air,
Buries in flowers the sinking form of Care.

These figures, pencil'd with a touch so light,
That every image seem'd an heavenly sprite,
Breathe on the ear; whose sight-enchanting frame
Four wheels sustain, of pale and purple flame;
For no fleet animals, to earth unknown,
Bear thro' ætherial fields this flying throne.
As by the subtle electrician's skill,
Globes seem to fly obedient to his will,
So these four circles of instinctive fire
Move by the impulse of their queen's desire,
Mount, or descend, by her directing care,
Or rest, supported by the buoyant air.

Now springing from the car, that hovering staid
High in the chamber of the sleeping maid,
The goddess, with a voice divinely clear,
Breath'd these kind accents in her votary's ear:—
"Come, my fair champion! who so well hast fought
The useful battles of contentious thought;
To aid thy gentle spirit to sustain
The final conflict of thy destin'd pain,
View the rewards that, in my realms of bliss,
Wait the sweet victor in such war as this!
So haply may thy mind, with strength renew'd,
The dark devices of the fiend elude;
By one blest effort seal thy triumphs past,
And gain thy promis'd guerdon in the last."

As thus she spoke, her heavenly arms embrac'd,
And in the car the conscious maiden plac'd.
Quick at her wish the flaming wheels ascend,
No clouds impede them, wheresoe'er they bend.
As thro' the empire of the winds they rush'd,
The winds were all in mute submission hush'd:

And now SERENA, from th' exalted car,
Look'd down, astonish'd, on each sinking star:
Flying o'er lucid orbs, whose distant light
Yet has not reach'd the scope of human sight;
And now, not distant from the bounds of space,
The guardian Sprite suspends their rapid race:
And, while in deep amaze the nymph admires
The circling meteors' inoffensive fires,
Pleas'd at her wonder, the mild Power addrest,
With kind intelligence, her earthly guest:
"Of these three orbs, that in yon crystal sphere
A separate system in themselves appear,
The last, whose luminous and steady form
Shines softly bright and moderately warm,
Contains my palace, and the gentle train
Whom I have wafted to this pure domain.
At equal distance my dominions lie
From these two larger worlds, more near thine eye:
Observe their difference as our wheels advance,
And passing, take of each a transient glance."

So speaking, to the grosser globe she sprung,
Her car suspended o'er its surface hung,
In heavy air; for round this orb was roll'd
A circling vapour, dull, and damp, and cold.
"Here," says SOPHROSYNE, "those beings dw
Who wanted soul to act or ill or well;
Who saunter'd thoughtless thro' their mortal tim
Without a care, a virtue, or a crime;
Here still they saunter in this languid scene:
But pass the dozing crowd, and mark their Que
And now, slow-riding on a tortoise' back,
Her features lifeless, and each fibre slack.
Full in their view the nymph Indifference came;
The quick SERENA soon perceiv'd her name;
For, as in solemn creeping state she rode,
In her lax hand she held fair GREVILLE's ode.
Ne'er did the Muse from her sweet treasure cull
Incense so precious for a Power so dull.
Still, as she mov'd along her even way,
The heavy goddess tried to read the lay;

But at each pause her inattentive eye
Stray'd from the paper, which she held awry;
Nor could her lips a single line repeat,
Tho' the soft verse, most ravishingly sweet,
Thro' Time's just ear will lasting pleasure spread,
And charm the poppy from Oblivion's head.
Thus, like a city mayor, whose heavy barge
Steers its dull progress at the public charge,
This Power, so cumber'd by her empire's weight,
Makes her slow circuit round her sluggish state.
Around her, tribes of rambling sceptics crawl,
Tho' moving, dubious if they move at all.
Before her, languid Pomp, her marshal, creeps,
Whose hand her banner half unfolded keeps,
Its quaint device her dull dominion spoke;
An eagle, numb'd by the torpedo's stroke!

"Enough of scenes so foreign to thy soul!"
SOPHROSYNE exclaim'd; "from this dark goal
Pass we to regions opposite to this!"
She spoke; and, darting o'er the wide abyss,

Her car, like lightening in quick flashes hurl'd,
Shot to the confines of a clearer world.
Now lovelier views the virgin's mind absorb;
For now they hover'd o'er a lucid orb.
Here the soft air, luxuriantly warm,
Imparts now lustre to SERENA's form:
Her eyes with more expressive radiance speak,
And richer roses open on her cheek.
Here as she gaz'd, she felt in every vein
A blended thrill of pleasure and of pain;
Yet every object glittering in her view,
Her quick regard with sweet attraction drew.
SOPHROSYNE, who saw the gentle fair
Lean o'er these confines with peculiar care,
Smil'd at the tender interest she display'd,
And spoke regardful of the pensive maid:
"Well may'st thou bend o'er this congenial sphere;
For Sensibility is sovereign here.
Thou seest her train of sprightly damsels sport,
Where the soft spirit holds her rural court;

But fix thine eye attentive to the plain,
And mark the varying wonders of her reign."
As thus she spoke, she pois'd her airy seat
High o'er a plain, exhaling every sweet:
For round its precincts, all the flowers, that bloom,
Fill'd the delicious air with rich perfume;
And in the midst a verdant throne appear'd,
In simplest form by graceful fancy rear'd,
And deck'd with flowers; not such whose flaunting dyes
Strike with the strongest tint our dazzled eyes:
But those wild herbs that tenderest fibres bear,
And shun th' approaches of a damper air.
Here stood the lovely ruler of the scene,
And beauty, more than pomp, announc'd the queen.
The bending snow-drop, and the briar-rose,
The simple circle of her crown compose;
Roses of every hue her robe adorn,
Except th' insipid rose without a thorn.
Thro' her thin vest her heighten'd beauties shine;
For earthly gauze was never half so fine.

Of that enchanting age her figure seems,
When smiling nature, with the vital beams
Of vivid youth, and pleasure's purple flame,
Gilds her accomplish'd work—the female frame!
With rich luxuriance tender, sweetly wild,
And just between the woman and the child.
Her fair left arm around a vase she flings,
From which the tender plant Mimosa springs;
Towards its leaves, o'er which she fondly bends,
The youthful fair her vacant hand extends
With gentle motion, anxious to survey
How far the feeling fibres own her sway;
The leaves, as conscious of their queen's command,
Successive fall at her approaching hand!
Her tender breast with pity seems to pant,
And shrinks at every shrinking of the plant.

Around their sovereign, on the verdant ground,
Sweet airy forms in mystic measures bound.
The mighty master of the revel, Love,
In notes more soothing than his mother's dove,

Prompts the soft strain that melting virgins sing,
Or sportive trips around the frolic ring,
Coupling, with radiant wreaths of lambent fire,
Fair fluttering Hope, and rapturous Desire.
Unnumber'd damsels differing charms display,
Pensive with bliss, or in their pleasures gay;
And the wide prospect yields one touching sight
Of tender, yet diversified delight.
But, the bright triumphs of their joy to check,
In the clear air there hangs a dusky speck;
It swells—it spreads—and rapid, as it grows,
O'er the gay scene a chilling shadow throws.
The fond SERENA, who beheld its flight,
Suspects no evil from a cloud so light;
For harmless round her the thin vapours wreathe,
Not hiding from her view the scene beneath;
But, ah! too soon, with pity's tender pain,
She saw its dire effects o'er all the plain;
Quick from the spot the sounds of anguish flow,
And joy's sweet carols end in shrieks of woe:

The wither'd flowers are fall'n, that bloom'd so fair,
And poison all the pestilential air.
From the rent earth dark demons force their way,
And make the sportive revellers their prey.
Here gloomy Terror, with a shadowy rope,
Seems, like a Turkish mute, to strangle Hope;
There jealous Fury drowns in blood the fire
That sparkled in the eye of young Desire;
And lifeless Love lets merciless Despair
From his crush'd frame his bleeding pinions tear.
But pangs more cruel, more intensely keen,
Wound and distract their sympathetic queen:
With fruitless tears she o'er their misery bends;
From her sweet brow the thorny rose she rends,
And, bow'd by grief's insufferable weight,
Frantic she curses her immortal state:
The griev'd SERENA, as this curse she hears,
Feels her bright eye suffus'd with kindred tears;
And her kind breast, where quick compassion swell'd
Shar'd in each bitter suffering she beheld.

The guardian Power survey'd her lovely grief,
And spoke in gentle terms of mild relief:
" For this soft tribe thy heaviest fear dismiss,
And know their pains are transient as their bliss:
Rapture and Agony, in Nature's loom,
Have form'd the changing tissue of their doom;
Both interwoven with so nice an art,
No power can tear the twisted threads apart:
Yet happier these, to Nature's heart more dear,
Than the dull offspring in the torpid sphere,
Where her warm wishes, and affections kind,
Lose their bright current in the stagnant mind.
Here grief and joy so suddenly unite,
That anguish serves to sublimate delight."

She spoke; and, ere SERENA could reply,
The vapour vanish'd from the lucid sky;
The nymphs revive, the shadowy fiends are fled,
The new-born flowers a richer fragrance shed;

The gentle ruler of the changeful land,
Smiling, resum'd her symbol of command;
Replac'd the roses of her regal wreath,
Still trembling at the thorns, that lurk beneath:
But to her wounded subjects quick to pay
The tender duties of imperial sway,
Their wants she succour'd, they her wish obey'd,
And all recover'd by alternate aid;
While, on the lovely queen's enchanting face,
Departed sorrow's faint and fainter trace
Gave to each touching charm a more attractive grace.
Now, laughing Sport, from the enlighten'd plain,
Clear'd with quick foot the vestiges of pain;
The gay scene grows more beautifully bright,
Than when it first allur'd SERENA's sight;
Still her fond eyes o'er all the prospect range,
Flashing sweet pleasure at the blissful change:
Her curious thoughts with fond attachment burn,
Yet more of this engaging land to learn.

She finds the chief attendants of the queen,
Sweet females, wafted from our human scene;
But, as it chanc'd, while all the realm reviv'd,
A spirit masculine from earth arriv'd:
Two airy guides conduct the gentle shade;
Genius, in robes of braided flames array'd,
And a fantastic nymph, in manners nice,
Profusely deck'd with many an odd device;
Sister of him, whose luminous attire
Flashes with unextinguishable fire;
Like him in features, in her looks as wild,
And Singularity by mortals styl'd.
The eager queen, and all her smiling court,
Surround the welcome shade in gentle sport;
For in their new associate all rejoice,
All pant to hear the accents of his voice.
Tho' o'er his frame th' Armenian robe was flung,
The pleasing stranger spoke the Gallic tongue;
But in that language his enchanting art
Inspir'd new energy, that seiz'd the heart;

In terms so eloquent, so sweetly bold,
A story of disastrous love he told,
Convuls'd with sympathy, the list'ning train,
At every pause, with dear delicious pain,
Intreat him to renew the fascinating strain.
And now, SERENA, with suspended breath,
Listen'd, and caught the tale of Julia's death;
And quick she cries, ere tears had time to flow,
"Blest be this hour! for now I see Rousseau."
Fondly she gaz'd, till the enchanting sound
In such a potent spell her spirit bound,
That, lost in sweet illusion, she forgot
The promis'd scenes of the sublimer spot;
Till now her mild remembrancer, whose care,
Stray'd not a moment from the mortal fair,
Rous'd her rapt mind, preparing her to meet
The brighter wonders of her blissful seat;
While her instinctive car's obedient frame
Now upward rose, like undulating flame.

As when some victor on the watery world,
Bright honour gilding all his sails unfurl'd,

Steers into port, while to the laughing sky
His streamers tell his triumph as they fly;
Expecting thousands line the crowded strand,
Swell the glad voice, or wave the joyous hand,
Pressing to view the sight, their vows implor'd,
And hail their glory and their strength restor'd:
So the blest beings of this smiling scene
Flock'd round the car of their returning queen.
The radiant car, from which they now alight,
Careful she gives to a selected sprite,
A nymph of snowy vest and lovely frame,
Fidelity her fair and spotless name;
Then, happy to review her hallow'd home,
Leads her sweet guest to her celestial dome.

Gentlest of powers! for every purpose fit,
To strengthen wisdom, and embellish wit;—
Thou, whose mild arts, possess'd by thee alone,
Can give to Virtue's voice a sweeter tone;
Allay the frost of age, or fire of youth,
And lend attraction to severest truth;

Improve e'en Beauty by thy graceful ease,
Or teach Deformity herself to please;—
Inspire the bard, whose just ambition pants
To guide weak mortals to thy heavenly haunts!
Grant him, in notes, that, like thy soft control,
Allure attention, and possess the soul;
Grant him to shew, in luminous display,
The mystic wonders of thy secret sway!

Now, at the sight of the presiding power,
Wide spread the gates of a stupendous tower,
On whose firm height, commanding Nature's bound,
The faithful warder of the fort they found,
Wakeful Intelligence, a trusty sprite,
Whose eyes are piercing as the solar light,
And ever on the watch to sound alarm,
If aught of dusky hue, portending harm,
Should, in defiance of her mandate, dare
Approach the palace of th' imperial fair.
Within his ward, magnificently great,
Lies the rich armoury, that guards her state.

Here stands Conviction's strong and lucid spear,
Whose touch annihilates suspense and fear;
Here, Truth's unsullied adamantine shield,
Which, save SOPHROSYNE, no power can wield;
And Reason's trenchant blade of blazing steel,
Its edge and polish form'd by friendly zeal;
And, not less sure their destin'd mark to hit,
Pointed by Virtue's hand, the shafts of Wit;
And Ridicule's strong bolt, whose stunning blow
Lays towering Vice and fearless Folly low.
Here too the goddess kept, in mystic state,
Those sweet rewards that on her champions wait,
Guerdons more precious than triumphant palms:—
The glance of Gratitude for mental alms,
The kiss of Peace, and Reconcilement's tear,
And smiles of Sympathy, are treasur'd here.

These precincts past, now hand in hand they came
To the rich fabric of majestic frame;
Instinct with joy their sovereign to behold,
The gates of massive adamant unfold;

And, as the gently-moving valves unclose,
Mysterious music from their motion flows!
The airy notes thro' all the palace roam,
And dulcet echoes fill the festive dome:
A gorgeous hall amaz'd SERENA's eyes,
Compar'd to which, in splendor, strength, and size,
The noblest works, of which Tradition sings,
Judaic shrine, or seat of Memphian kings,
Would seem more humble than the waxen cell
In which the skilful bee is proud to dwell.
Here sits a Power, in whose angelic face
Beauty is sweeten'd by maternal grace;
Her radiant seat, surpassing mortal art,
Supports an emblem of her liberal heart,
A pelican, who rears her callow brood,
And from her vitals seems to draw their food.
Around this spirit flock a filial host,
Who bless her empire, and her guidance boast.
Here every science, all the arts attend,
In her they hail their parent and their friend;

Each to her presence brings the happy few,
Whose dearest glory from her favour grew.
Here, in her simple charms, with youthful fire,
Proud to display the magic of her lyre,
Soul-soothing Harmony presents her band:
Beside her Orpheus and Amphion stand.
Here, mild Philosophy, whose thoughtful frown
Is sweetly shaded by her olive crown,
(In all her Attic elegance array'd,
Strong to convince, and gentle to persuade)
To her, whose breath inspir'd his every rule,
Leads the blest sire of the Socratic school.
Each animating bard and moral sage,
The heaven-taught minds of every clime and age,
Who soften'd manners, and refin'd the soul,
Flock to this presence, as to glory's goal;
And, as the mother's heart, that yearns to bless
The rival innocents that round her press,
Delights to see them, as her love they share,
Sport in her sight, and flourish by her care;-

Fondly responsive to their every call,
Tender of each, and provident for all:
So this sweet image of celestial grace,
Who sits encircled by her lovely race,
To every science vital strength imparts,
And rears the circle of the social arts;
With such solicitude she gives to each
Pow'rs of sublimer aim and wider reach.
And now SOPHROSYNE, who near her prest,
Thus spoke her title to her earthly guest:—
"Behold the honour'd form, without whose aid
My strength must vanish, and my glory fade!
Source of my being, and my life's support!
EUNOIA call'd in this celestial court,
BENEVOLENCE the name she bears on earth,
The guard of weakness, and the friend of worth."

She ended: and the mild maternal form
Embrac'd SERENA with a smile as warm
As the gay spirit Vegetation wears,
When she to crown her favourite nymph prepares,

When, pleas'd her flowery treasures to display,
She pours them in the lap of youthful May.

But how, SERENA! how may human speech
Thy heavenly raptures in this moment reach?
If aught of earthly sentiment may vie
With the pure joy these happy scenes supply,
'Tis when, unmixt with trouble and with pain,
Love glides in secret thro' the glowing vein;
When some fond youth, unconscious of its fire,
Free from chill fear and turbulent desire,
With every thought absorb'd in soft delight,
Sees all creation in his fair-one's sight,
And feels a blissful state without a name,
Repose of soul with harmony of frame.
So, plung'd in pleasure of the purest kind,
SERENA gaz'd on the maternal mind;
Gaz'd till SOPHROSYNE's directing aid
Thus summon'd to new sights th' obedient maid:—
"Haste, my fair charge, for of this ample state,
Tracts yet unseen thy visitation wait.

The pressing hours forbid me to unfold
Each separate province which these confines hold;
But I will lead thee to that blissful crew,
Whose kindred spirits best deserve thy view."

So speaking, her attentive guest she led
Thro' scenes, that still increasing wonder bred.
Where'er she trod, thro' all her gorgeous seat,
Soft music echoed from beneath her feet:
Passing a portal, on whose lucid stone
Emblems of innocence and beauty shone,
They reach a lawn with verdant lustre bright,
And view the bowers of permanent delight.
No fiery sun here forms a scorching noon,
No baleful meteor gleams, no chilling moon:
But, from a latent source, one soothing light,
Whose constant rays repel the mist of night,
Tho' tender, cheerful, and tho' warm, serene,
Gives lasting beauty to the lovely scene.
No sensual thought this paradise profanes;
For here tried Excellence in triumph reigns,

Benignant cares eternal joys supply,
And bliss angelic beams in every eye.

" In yonder groups," the leading spirit cried,
" My fav'rite females see, my fairest pride !
The first in rank is that distinguish'd train,
Whose strength of soul was tried by Hymen's chain :
Tho' beauty blest their form, and love, their guide,
Their nuptial band with happiest omens tied,
Beauty and love, they felt, may lose the art
To fix inconstant man's eccentric heart ;
Yet, conscious of their lord's neglected vow,
No virtue frown'd outrageous on their brow,
To keep returning tenderness aloof,
By coarse upbraiding, and despis'd reproof:
With sorrow smother'd in attraction's smile,
They strove the sense of misery to beguile ;
And, from wild passion's perilous abyss,
Lure the lost wanderer back to faithful bliss.
See mild Octavia o'er this band preside,
Voluptuous Antony's neglected bride,

Whose feeling heart, with all a mother's c
Rear'd the young offspring of a rival fair.
Far other trials rais'd yon lovely crew,
Tho' in connubial scenes their merit grew
It was their chance, ere judgment was ma
When glittering toys the infant mind allur
Following their parents' avaricious rule,
To wed, with hopes of bliss, a wealthy fo
When time remov'd Delusion's veil by ste
And show'd the drear vacuity of wealth;
When sad experience prov'd the bitter fat
Of beauty coupled to a senseless mate:
These gentle wives still gloried to submit
These, tho' invited by alluring wit,
Refus'd in paths of lawless joy to range,
Nor murmur'd at the lot they could not c
But, with a lively sweetness, unopprest
By a dull husband's lamentable jest,
Their constant rays of gay good-humour s
A guardian glory round their ideot's head

The next in order are those lovely forms,
Whose patience weather'd all paternal storms;
By filial cares, the mind's unfailing test,
Well have they earn'd these seats of blissful rest:
They, unrepining at severe restraint,
Peevish command, and undeserv'd complaint;
Bent with unwearied kindness to appease
Each fancied want of querulous disease;
Gave up those joys which youthful hearts engage,
To watch the weakness of parental age.

Turn to this cheerful band; and mark in this,
Spirits who justly claim my realms of bliss!
Most lovely these! when judg'd by generous truth,
Tho' beauty is not their's, nor blooming youth:
For these are they, who, in life's thorny shade,
Repin'd not at the name of ancient maid.
No proud disdain, no narrowness of heart,
Held them from Hymen's tempting rites apart;
But fair Discretion led them to withdraw
From the priz'd honour of his proffer'd law;

To quit the object of no hasty choice,
In mild submission to a parent's voice;
The valued lover with a sigh resign,
And sacrifice delight at Duty's shrine.
With smiles they bore, from angry spleen exempt,
Injurious mockery, and coarse contempt:
'Twas theirs to clasp, each selfish care above,
A sister's orphans with parental love,
And all her tender offices supply,
Tho' bound not by the strong maternal tie:
'Twas theirs to bid intestine quarrels cease,
And form the cement of domestic peace.
No throbbing joy their spotless bosom fir'd,
Save what Benevolence herself inspir'd;
No praise they sought, except that praise refin'd,
Which the heart whispers to the worthy mind.

Such are these gentle tribes, the happy few,
Who share the triumph to their victory due:
Angelic aims their spotless minds employ,
And fill their measure of unchequer'd joy.

Behold! where some with generous ardor wait
Around yon seer, who holds the book of fate;
Those awful leaves with eager glance they turn,
Thence with celestial zeal they fondly learn
What dangers threaten, thro' the vale of earth,
Their kindred pilgrims, ere they rise to birth:
To earth they still invisibly descend,
In that dark scene congenial minds defend,
From pleasure's bud drive spleen's corroding worm,
And in my votaries' heart my power confirm.

Delights more calm yon listening band employ,
Who deeply drink of intellectual joy.
See them around that speaking nymph rejoice,
Their pleasure varying with her varied voice!
What graces in the sweet enthusiast glow!
Repeating here whate'er she learns below.
Memory her name, her charge o'er earth to flit,
And cull the fairest flowers of human wit.
Whatever Genius, in his happiest hour,
Has penn'd, of moral force and comic power,

To warm the heart, the spells of Spleen unbind;
And pour gay sunshine o'er the misty mind;
Teach men to cherish their fraternal tie,
And view kind nature with a filial eye;
This active spirit catches in her flight,
Skill'd to retain, and happy to recite.
Here she delivers each bright work, and each
Gains new attraction from her graceful speech.
Warpt by no envy, by no love misled,
Equal she holds the living and the dead;
Alike rehearsing, as they claim their turn,
The song of Anstey, and the tale of Sterne.
Here Truth in Honour's seat a bard enthrones,
Who caught from Nature all her finest tones;
Her fav'rite bard! to decorate whose lyre
Talents of wide diversity conspire:
Who blends, (enchanting friend of every hour!)
Humour's light grace with Fancy's lofty power:
Freedom and sanctity, in union sweet,
The Task of Cowper (their own Task!) repeat,

To match whose beauties (all to virtue dear!)
Verse-proud Antiquity presents no peer.

But morning calls thee hence.—Yet one scene more,
My fostering love shall lead thee to explore.
This, thy last sight, with careful eyes survey,
And mark th' extensive nature of my sway."

Thus with fond zeal the guardian spirit said,
And to new precincts of her palace led;
The scene she enter'd of her richest state,
Where on her voice the subject passions wait:
Here rose a throne of living gems so bright
No breath could sully their benignant light;
This, her immortal seat, the gracious guide
Assum'd: her ward stood wondering at her side.
Swift as they felt their ruling Power inthron'd
Etherial beings, who her empire own'd,
Crowded in glittering pomp the gorgeous scene,
To pay their homage to their heavenly queen.

First came chaste Love, whose sweet harmonious form
Ne'er felt Suspicion's soul-convulsing storm;
No baleful arrow in his quiver lies,
No blinding veil enwraps his sparkling eyes;
There all the rays of varied joy unite,
And jointly shed unspeakable delight.
With him was Friendship, like a virgin drest,
The soft Asbestos form'd her simple vest,
Whose wond'rous folds, in fiercest flames entire,
Mock the vain ravages of consuming fire:
Around this robe, a mystic chain she wore,
Each golden link a star of diamonds bore;
Force could not tear the finish'd work apart,
Nor Int'rest loose it by his subtlest art:
But, strange to tell, if the presiding Power,
Who to her favorite gave this precious dower,
If kind SOPHROSYNE could fail to breathe
Her vital virtue on this magic wreath,
The parts must sever, faithless to their trust,
The gold grow dross, and every diamond dust.

These Valour follow'd, deck'd with verdant palm,
Gracefully bold, majestically calm.
A mingled troop succeed, with festive sound,
Wisdom with olive, Wit with feathers crown'd;
Here, hand in hand they move, no longer foes,
Their charms encreasing as their union grows;
Pure spirits all, who hating mental strife,
Exalt creation, and embellish life;
All here attend, and in their sovereign's praise,
Their circling forms the song of glory raise.

The blest SERENA drinks, with ravish'd ear,
The melting music of the tuneful sphere.
Now in its close the soothing echoes roll
O'er her rapt fancy, and intrance her soul;
Her senses sink in soft Oblivion's bands,
Till faithful Jenny at her pillow stands,
Recalls each mental and corporeal power,
While she proclaims aloud the passing hour;

And, in a voice expressive of surprise,
Too shrill to seem the music of the skies,
Informs the startled fair 'tis time to rise.
Gay as Aurora from her couch she sprung,
Joy in her eyes and music on her tongue.

END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

CANTO VI

BLEST be the heart of sympathetic mould,
Whatever form that gentle heart infold,
Whose generous fibres with fond terror shake,
When keen affliction threatens to o'ertake
Young artless Beauty, as alarm'd she strays
Thro' the strange windings of this mortal maze!
To such, SERENA, be thy story known,
Whose bosom best can make thy lot their own,
And, kindly sharing in thy trials past,
Attend, with sweet anxiety, the last.
The hour approaches, the tremendous hour,
In whose dark moments deeper perils lower;
Still so inwrapt in Pleasure's gay disguise,
They lurk invisible to Caution's eyes;
And, unsuspected by the fair-one, wait
To cancel or confirm her blissful fate.

Her lively mind with bright ideas stor'd,
She takes her station at the breakfast board:
Still her rapt soul the heavenly vision fills,
And sweeter graces in her smile instills;
New hopes of triumph glide thro' every nerve,
And arm her glowing heart with firm reserve;
Conscious the final trying chance impends,
To bear its force her every power she bends;
In her quick thought ambitious to presage,
How Spleen's dark agents may exert their rage,
She ponders on what perils may befall,
And fondly deems her mind a match for all.
Ah, lovely nymph! this dangerous pride forego;
Pride may betray—security's thy foe.

While fancied prudence thus, a foreign guest,
Sits doubly cherish'd in SERENA's breast,
Behold a billet her attention steal,
No common arms compose its ample seal;
Th' unfolding paper breathes a roseate scent,
Sweet harbinger of joy, its kind intent!

Of courteous FILLIGREE it bears the name,
Clear symptom of the peer's increasing flame!
The gracious earl, lamenting pleasure lost,
And fair SERENA in her wishes crost,
Has plann'd, in honour of the lovely maid,
A fancied ball, a private masquerade,
And supplicates her sire, with warm esteem,
To smile indulgent on the festive scheme.
All arts he uses to insure the grant,
Nor leaves unask'd the eager maiden aunt.
Quick at the sound SERENA's glowing heart
Throbs with gay hopes; but soon those hopes depart:
Reflection, in her soul a faithful guard,
The opening avenues of pleasure barr'd:
She deem'd the plan of this delightful show,
But the new ambush of her secret foe;
The bliss too bright to realize, she guess'd,
And chas'd th' idea from her guarded breast.
While these discreet resolves her thought employ,
Tranquil she triumphs o'er her smother'd joy.

Not so the knight—to his parental eyes,
In dazzling pomp delusive visions rise:
That coronet, the object of his vow,
He sees suspended o'er his daughter's brow;
Eager he burns to snap the pendent thread,
And fix the glory on his darling's head.
Far wiser aims the ancient maiden caught,
No empty gew-gaw flutters in her thought;
But, while more keenly she applauds the plan,
Her hope is solid and substantial man;
Not for her infant niece, whose baby frame
She holds unfit for Hymen's holy flame;
But for her riper self, whose strength may bear
The heaviest burden of connubial care.

Tho' different phantoms dance before their sight
Niece, aunt, and father, in one wish unite,
To join the banquet is their common choice,
The business past with no dissenting voice;
And the warm sire, in whom ambition burn'd,
A note of grateful courtesy return'd:

His billet seal'd, the glad good-humour'd knight
Launch'd forth, like Nestor, on his youthful might:
" O could I now, in spite of age, retain
That active vigour, and that sprightly vein,
Which led me once the lively laugh to raise
Among the merrier wits of former days,
When rival beauties would around me throng,
And gay ridottos listen to my song!
Such were I now, as on the festive night,
When C——h's charms amaz'd the public sight;
When the kind fair one, in a veil so thin
That the clear gauze was but a lighter skin,
Mask'd like a virgin just prepar'd to die,
Gave her plump beauties to each greedy eye!
On that fam'd night, (for then with frolic fire
Youth fill'd my heart, and humour strung my lyre)
Pleas'd in the sunshine of her smile to bask,
I danc'd around her in a devil's mask;
And idly chaunted an infernal ode,
In praise of all this female tempter shew'd.

The jocund crowd, who throng'd with me to gaz
Extoll'd my unpremeditated lays,
And Sport, who still of this old revel brags,
*Styl'd her the first of maids, and me of wags.
Then a light devil, now, reduc'd to limp,
I am but fit to play the hag-born imp;
Still, not to cross the frolic of this ball,
Still as the tortoise Caliban I'll crawl,
And if with gout my burning ankles flinch,
I'll call it Prospero's tormenting pinch;
Still in this shape I'll shew them what I am;
And PEN. shall go as Sycorax my dam."

So spoke the knight; and spoke with so muc
weight,
The listening females saw his word was fate;
For ne'er did Jove with so resolv'd a brow
To smiling Love his joyous scheme avow,

* Θεων Δια, Νεστορ τ' ανδρων.
See Nestor's Speech in the 11th Iliad.

When he concerted, for his special mirth,
A masquerading on the stage of earth,
And of the swan's soft plume, or bull's rough hair,
Order'd the fancy-dress he chose to wear.
From these let sapient antiquarians show
The ancient use of masquerades below.
SERENA smil'd to see this joyous fire
Infuse new youth in her determin'd sire;
But mute PENELOPE, with half a sigh,
"With one auspicious and one dropping eye,"
Heard the firm knight his fixt resolve impart,
Tickling at once and torturing her heart.
The ball she relish'd, but abhorr'd the task
To hide her beauties in a beldam's mask:
Miranda's name would better suit her plan,
A simple maiden, not afraid of man;
But us'd, alas! her brother's law to feel,
She knows that law admits not of repeal.
Trusting her charms will any garb enrich,
She deigns to take the habit of a witch.

Never did sorceress in the shades of night
Try to illuminate a filthy sprite
With fonder efforts, or with worse success,
Than PEN. now labour'd, in this wayward dress,
To give the sprightly show of living truth
To the poor ghost of her departed youth.
As witches o'er their magic cauldron bend,
Anxious to see their menial imps ascend;
So in her glass the ancient maiden pries,
And dreams new graces in her person rise.
No such delights, whose dear delusions please,
The mild SERENA in her mirror sees;
She, at whose toilet beauty's latent queen
Attends, enchanted with her filial mien,
And o'er her favourite's unconscious face
Breathes her own roseate glow and vivid grace.
She hastes her glittering garments to adjust,
With all the modest charms of sweet distrust,
Doubting that beauty, which she doubts alone,
Which dazzles every eye except her own.

The native diffidence which sway'd her mind,
Now feels new terrors with its own combin'd;
The robes of Ariel to the nymph recall
Those disappointments that may yet befall;
As her fair hands the gauze or tissue touch,
They fondly warn her not to hope too much.
She feels the friendly counsel they impart,
And caution reigns protector of her heart.

The fateful evening comes—the coach attends,
And first the gouty Caliban ascends;
Then in Deformity's well-suited pride,
Sour Sycorax is station'd by his side;
And last, with sportive smiles, divinely sweet,
Light Ariel perches on the vacant seat.
Fancy now paints the scene of pleasure near,
Yet fluttering gaiety is check'd by fear.
Her wish to view the festive sight runs high;
But the fond nymph remembers with a sigh,
From Hope's keen hand the cup of Joy may slip,
And fall untasted, tho' it reach the lip.

As the fine artist, whose nice toils aspire
To fame eternal by encaustic fire;
If he, with grief, has seen the faithless heat
Mar the rich labour it should make complete,
When next his hands, with trembling care, confide
To the fierce element his pencil's pride;
Watches unceasing the pernicious flame,
Terror and hope contending in his frame,
While his fair work the dangerous fire sustains,
Feels it in all his sympathetic veins,
And at each trivial sound that chance may cause,
Hears the gem crack, and sees its cruel flaws:
With such solicitude the panting maid
Past the long street, of every noise afraid.
Now, while around her rival flambeaus flare,
And the coach rattles thro' the crowded square,
She fears some dire mischance must yet befall,
Some demon snatch her from the promis'd ball;
And dreams no trial more severe than this,
So bright she figures the new scene of bliss.

Yet, horrid as it seems, her heart is bent
To bear e'en this, and bear it with content.

But, whirl'd at length within the porter's gate,
She thinks what perils at the ball may wait;
And, as she now alights, the fluttering fair
Invokes her guardian to protect her there,
Till thoughts of danger, thoughts of caution, fly
Before the magic blaze that meets her eye.
Th' advancing nymph, at every step she takes,
Pants with amazement, doubtful if she wakes;
Far as her eyes the glittering scene command,
'Tis all enchantment, all a fairy land;
No vestiges of modern pomp appear,
No modern melody salutes her ear:
With Moorish notes the echoing mansion rings,
And its transmuted form to fancy brings
The rich *Alhambra of the Moorish kings.

L

* See the views of this palace in Swinburne's Travels.

The peer, who keenly thirsts for fashion's praise,
To gild his revel with no common rays,
Summon'd his modish architect, whose skill
Can all the wishes of caprice fulfil.
His genius, equal to the wildest task,
Gave to the house itself a Gothic mask.
The chaplain, that no guest might feel neglect,
As a magician of the Arab sect,
Wav'd a presiding wand throughout the ball,
And well provided for the wants of all.

The peer himself, his prowess to evince,
Shines in the semblance of a Moorish prince;
And round the brilliant mimic hero wait
All pomp and circumstance of Moorish state:
Thro' all his splendid dome no eye could find
Aught unembellish'd, save the master's mind.
There, tho' represt by courtesy's control,
Lurks the low mover of the little soul,
Mean Vanity; whose slave can never prove
The heart-refining flame of genuine love.

While her cold joys his abject mind amuse,
His thoughts are busied on connubial views.
His house complete, its decorations plac'd
By the sure hand of fashionable Taste,
He only wants, to crown his modish life,
That last and finest moveable—a wife.
She too must prove, to fix his coy desire,
Such as the eye of fashion will admire.
His ball is but a jury, to decide
Upon the merit of his fancied bride.
If sweet SERENA, on this signal night,
Shines the first idol of the public sight;
If Gallantry's fixt eyes pronounce her fair,
By the sure sign of one unceasing stare;
And if, prophetic of her nobler doom,
Each rival beauty shudders at her bloom;
The dye is cast—he weds—the point is clear;
She cannot slight the vows of such a peer.
Thus argued in his mind the festive earl,
And, lest he lightly choose an awkard girl,

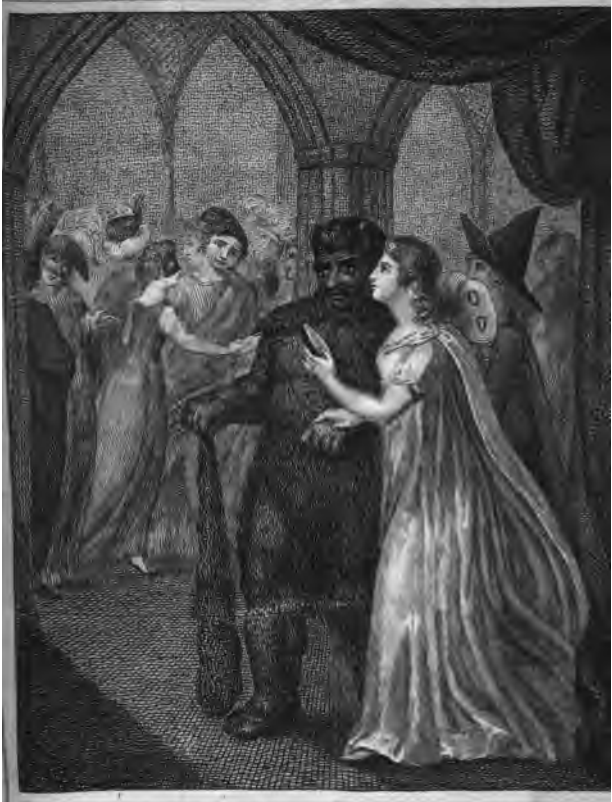
Wisely conven'd, on this important case,
Each fashionable judge of female grace.
Here beaux esprits in various figures lurk,
Of Jew and Gentile, Bramin, Tartar, Turk:
Wonder all shapes, in this assembly finds,
Hermits, and demons! emperors, and hinds!
All, that diversify life's crowded field,
And all prolific phantasy can yield:
But of the manly masks, a youthful bard
Seem'd most to challenge beauty's soft regard:
Adorn'd with native elegance, he wore
In simplest form, the minstrel dress of yore:
They call him EDWIN, who around him throng,
EDWIN, immortaliz'd in Beattie's song;
And, sooth to say, within a comely frame
He bore a heart that answer'd to the name;
For this neat habit deck'd a generous youth,
Of gentlest manners, and sincerest truth.
Tho' on his birth propitious Fortune smil'd,
No proud parental folly spoil'd the child;

And Genius, more beneficently kind,
Blest with superior wealth his manly mind.
Of years he barely counted twenty-one;
But, like a brilliant morn, his opening life begun.
Fain would the Muse on this her votary dwell,
And fully paint the youth she loves so well;
His graceful form, the music of his tongue,
What nymphs his lays allur'd, what lays he sung:
But higher cares her rambling song control;
SERENA's perils summon all her soul;
For Spleen, ambitious to exert her force,
Conscious this trial is her last resource,
Most keenly bent on her pernicious task,
Has shifted round the ball from mask to mask,
Watching the moment, with infernal care,
To form with deepest art her final snare,
And manacle the mind of the unguarded fair.

It comes, the moment that must fix her lot,
By her, (ah, thoughtless maid!) by her forgot;

Tho' the light Hours, e'en in their frolic ring,
Trembling perceive the fearful chance they bring,
And shuddering at the nymph's terrific state,
Seem anxious to suspend her doubtful fate.

Now social ease the place of sport supplied,
The hot oppressive mask was thrown aside,
And beauty shone reveal'd in all her blushing pride.
Superior still in features as in form,
With admiration flush'd, with pleasure warm,
The gay SERENA every eye allur'd;
The hearts her figure won her face secur'd:
A tender sweetness still the nymph maintain'd,
And Modesty o'er all her graces reign'd.
Well might her soul to brilliant hopes incline,
A thousand youths had call'd her charms divine;
A thousand friends had whisper'd in her ear,
That fate had mark'd her for the festive peer.
Her youthful fancy, tho' by pomp amus'd,
Wish'd not those offers which her heart refus'd:



Canto VI. Verse 294

Maria Flaxman inv. & del. W. Blake sculp.

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That tender heart, by no vain pride possest,
With indecisive trembling shook her breast,
Like a young bird, that, fluttering in the air,
Wishes to build her nest, yet knows not where.

The busy earl, his puny love to raise,
Hunted the circling whisper of her praise;
Heard Envy own her lovely charms, tho' loth,
Heard Taste attest them with a modish oath;
And, nuptial projects thickening in his mind,
Now his fair partner in the dance rejoin'd.
As now the sprightly music paus'd, my lord
Would touch with eagerness a softer chord;
Secure of all repulse, he vainly meant
Half to display, half hide his fond intent,
And, in dissembled passion's flowery tropes,
To sport at leisure with the virgin's hopes:
For this he fram'd a motley speech, replete
With amorous compliment and vain conceit.
The labour'd nothing with complacent pride
He spoke; but to his speech no nymph replied:

For in the moment, the lost fair devotes
Her willing ear to more attractive notes.
The minstrel happen'd near the nymph to walk,
Rapt with a bosom-friend in secret talk,
And, at the instant when the earl began
Half to unfold his matrimonial plan,
EDWIN, in whispers, from the crowd retir'd,
Chanc'd to repeat the sonnet she inspir'd:
The sounds, tho' faint, her recollection caught,
Drew her quick eye, and fixt her wondering thought.
Lost in this sweet surprise, she could not hear
A single accent of the amorous peer.
Spleen saw the moment that she sought to gain,
And perch'd triumphant on the noble's brain.
With jealous envy stung, and baffled pride,
" Contemptuous girl!" with sudden rage, he cried,
" If here to happier youths thy views incline,
I want not fairer nymphs who challenge mine.
Thy breast in vain with penitence may burn;
But once neglected I no more return."

Thus loudly speaking, with distemper'd heat,
Rudely he turn'd, with rancorous scorn replete.
SERENA, startled at th' injurious sound,
Survey'd th' insulting peer, who sternly frown'd;
Shame and resentment thro' her bosom rush,
Swell every vein, and raise the burning blush.
Love, new-born love, but in its birth conceal'd,
Nor to the nymph herself as yet reveal'd,
And just disdain, and anger's honest flame,
With complicated power convulse her frame;
Contending passions every thought confound,
And in tumultuous doubt her soul is drown'd.
Now treacherous pride, who tempts her tongue to trip,
Forms to a keen reply her quivering lip:
Insidious Spleen now hovers o'er the fair,
Deems her half lock'd within her hateful snare;
In her new slave, preparing to rejoice,
To taint her spirit, and untune her voice.
Hapless SERENA! what can save thee now?
The fiend's dark signet stamps thy clouded brow,

In thy swoln eye I see the starting drop:
This fatal shower, ætherial guardian! stop:
Haste to thy votary, haste her soul sustain,
Nor let the trials she has past be vain.
Ah me! while yet I speak, with shuddering dread
I hear the magic girdle's bursting thread.
This horrid omen, ye kind powers! avert:
Nor thou, bright zone! thy brighter charge desert.
Ah, fruitless prayer! her panting breast behold!
See! the gauze shakes in many a ruffled fold!
Forc'd from their station by her heaving heart,
From the strain'd girdle thrice three spangles start:
Thro' her disorder'd dress a pass they've found,
And fallen, see, they glitter on the ground!—
O blessed chance! with life-recalling light
The glittering monitors attract her sight!
Like stars emerging from the darken'd pole,
They sparkle safety to her harass'd soul.
See! from her brow the clouds of trouble fly,
Vexation's tear is vanish'd from her eye!

Her rosy cheeks with Joy's new radiance burn,
Like nature smiling at the sun's return;
The nymph, no more with mental darkness blind,
Shines the sweet ruler of her rescu'd mind.
Hence, hateful Spleen! thy fancied prize resign,
Renounce for ever what shall ne'er be thine;
For, conscious of her airy guardian's aid,
She feels new spirit thro' her heart convey'd,
And, inly blessing this victorious hour,
Her soul exults in its recover'd power.
In such mild terms she hails th' insulting peer,
As Spleen, if mortal, must expire to hear;
But, driven for ever from the lovely girl,
The foul fiend riots in the captive earl.
He answers not; but, with a sullen air,
On happier EDWIN, who approach'd the fair,
Darts such a glance of rage and envious hate,
As Satan cast on Eden's blissful state,
When on our parents first he fixt his sight,
And undelighted gaz'd on all delight;

So doom'd to look, and doom'd such pangs to feel,
Scornful he turn'd on his elastic heel.

" O lovely mildness! O angelic maid!
Deserving homage, tho' to scorn betray'd;
Rise still, sweet spirit, rise these wrongs above,
Turn from injurious pride to faithful love;
Tho' on my brow no coronet may shine,
Wealth I can offer at thy beauty's shrine,
And, worthier thee, a heart that worships thine."
Thus, with new-kindled love's aspiring flame,
Spoke the fond youth conceal'd by EDWIN's name,
The gallant FALKLAND, rich in native worth,
By fortune blest, and not of abject birth.
Warmly he spoke, with that indignant heat
With which the generous heart ne'er fails to beat,
When worth insulted wakens virtuous ire,
And injur'd beauty sets the soul on fire.
Quick to his voice the startled virgin turn'd,
With wonder, hope, and joy, her bosom burn'd;

With sweet confusion, flurried and amaz'd,
On his attractive form she wildly gaz'd.
Full on her thought the friendly visions rush'd;
Blushing she view'd him, view'd him still and blush'd;
And, soft affection quickening at the sight,
Perchance had swoon'd with fulness of delight.
But that her father's voice, with quick control,
Recall'd the functions of her fainting soul.
When on the distant seat, where, fondly fixt,
He view'd the nymph, as in the dance she mixt,
He indistinctly heard, with wounded ear,
The spleenful outrage of the angry peer;
Swift at th' imperfect sound, with choler wild,
He sprung to succour his insulted child;
But ere his fury into language broke,
Love calm'd the storm that arrogance awoke.
The sudden burst of FALKLAND'S tender flame,
His winning manners, his distinguish'd name,
His liberal soul, by Fortune's smile carest,
All join'd to harmonize the father's breast.

His fiery thoughts subside in glad surprise,
And to the generous youth he warmly cries:
" Ingenuous FALKLAND! by thy frankness won,
My willing heart would own thee for my son;
But on thy hopes SERENA must decide:—
Haste we together from this house of pride!"

So spoke the sire; for, to her votary kind,
SOPHROSYNE inspir'd his soften'd mind.
Speaking, he smil'd, to see that on his word
The lover hung, and blest the sounds he heard;
That his embarrass'd child his sentence caught
With each tumultuous sign of tender thought;
Whose blushes, springing from the heart, declare
The dawn of fondness in the modest fair.
Th' enchanted youth with ecstasy convey'd
Forth from the troubled feast the trembling maid.

As the keen sailor, whom his daring soul
Has drawn, too vent'rous, near the freezing pole;

Who, having slighted Caution's tame advice,
Seems wedg'd within impervious worlds of ice:
If, from each chilling form of peril free,
At length he reach the unincumber'd sea,
With joy superior to his transient pain,
Rushes, exulting, o'er th' expansive main:
Such strong delight SERENA's bosom shar'd,
When sweet reflection to her heart declar'd,
That all the trials of her fate were past,
And Love's decisive plaudits seal'd the last.
Her airy guard prepares the softest down,
From Peace's wing, to line the nuptial crown:
Her smiles accelerate the bridal morn,
And clear her votary's path from every thorn.
On the quick match the Prude's keen censures fall,
Blind to the heavenly power who guided all:
But mild SERENA scorn'd the prudish play,
To wound warm love with frivolous delay;
Nature's chaste child, not Affectation's slave,
The heart she meant to give, she frankly gave.

Her jocund sire no gouty humours teaze;
Mental delight creates corporeal ease:
His quick affection crowns what chance begun,
And gaily glories in his destin'd son.
PENELOPE herself, no longer seen
In the sour semblance of tormenting Spleen,
Buys for her niece the robes of nuptial state,
Nor scolds the mercer once thro' all the long debate.
For quick dispatch, the honest man of law
Toils half the night the legal ties to draw.
At length th' enraptur'd youth, all forms complete,
Bears his sweet bride to his paternal seat:
On a fair lawn the cheerful mansion stood,
And high behind it rose a circling wood.
As the blest lord of this extensive reign
Led his dear partner thro' her new domain,
With fond surprise, SERENA soon descried
A temple raised to her ætherial guide.
Its ornaments she view'd with tender awe,
Their fashion such as she in vision saw;

For the kind youth, her grateful smile to gain,
Had, from her clear description, deck'd the fane.
Joyful he cried to his angelic wife,
" Be this kind power the worship of our life !"
He spoke; and led her to the inmost shrine;
Here, link'd in rosy bands, two votaries shine;
The pencil had imparted life to each,
With energy that seem'd beyond its reach.
First stood Connubial Love, a manly youth,
Whose bright eye spoke the ardent vows of truth;
Friendship, sweet smilling, fill'd the second place,
In all the softer charms of virgin grace,
Their meeting arms a mystic tablet raise,
Deck'd with these lines, the moral of my lays:—
" Virtue's an ingot of Peruvian gold,
SENSE the bright ore Potosi's mines unfold;
But TEMPER'S image must their use create,
And give these precious metals sterling weight."

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